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" down with the ready, and i'll hand ye your change." -Page 87.

"THE CRUSHER"

AND

THE CROSS.

A Harratibe of a Remarkable Conbersion.

By A. FERGUSSON,

Author of "Life's Bye-Ways, and what I found in them."



LONDON:

S. W. PARTRIDGE, 9, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1866.



TO

ROBERT BENNETT THOMPSON, ESQ.,

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF MUCH KINDNESS RECRIVED FROM HIMSELF, AND THOSE NEAR AND DEAR TO HIM,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS DEDICATED, BY

THE AUTHOR.

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	-			

TO THE READER.

DEAR READER,

The following simple narrative is true. All the persons mentioned as in any way connected with the striking conversion of Jim were personally known to the Author. In many of the scenes described the narrator took a part, and was frequently honoured of God in cheering and directing Jim's wounded spirit as it groped its way from the gloom of sin into the light of life.

One of the happy band to whom Jim, under God, owes his knowledge of Christ is gone to his rest. I refer to old Father Firm, than whom few have done more to rescue souls, honour the Master, or make clear to all the realities of the life of faith. And although years have passed since God took him, we who remain still feel his influence; still to us his memory is as "ointment poured forth;" his example, like a "trail of heaven's own light," seems to beckon us "onward and upward" in every thing useful, noble, and daring in the field of Christian effort.

Most of those who laboured with the author at Little K.—, at the time of Jim's conversion, are now, in the providence of God, widely scattered over England and foreign lands. Notwithstanding this, all look back to that place, to that time, and Jim's conversion, as the happiest memories in all their labours of love and works of faith. Each by the grace of God still continues at the good old work in the good old way, and will do so till that day

when, with old Thomas, they shall sit down, each bringing his trophies with him, under the shade of the Tree of Life, by the river of life; and there, like old soldiers beneath brighter skies and in happier times, they shall "fight their battles o'er again."

The author, at the request of nearly all concerned, has presented each person under an assumed name. The only reasons for this being modesty and prudence.

The motive that led the author to the publication of Jim's story was simply a desire to glorify the name of Jesus, to whom, with Jim, he owes much—all—even the redemption of his soul. Dear Reader, do you know the Lord? Have you seen Jesus? If compelled to answer—no, behold in Jim the curse of sin and the cure of sin.

Is my reader a labourer in some dreary region of rags and filth, where everything to the eye is repulsive; to the feelings—deadening; and to the eye of sense—impracticable? This little book shall not have been written in vain, if it minister one drop of consolation to thy sadness, one spark to fire thy flagging zeal, or suggest one new idea to help thee in thy work. To thee let this little book whisper, "Success is the rule, the want of it the exception." Courage, brother! say, "My judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." Victory is sure, arise from the dust and sing, inscribing on your banner the "never despair" of a living faith.

"THE CRUSHER" AND THE CROSS.

CHAPTER I.

"But love is indestructible;
Its holy flame for ever burneth;
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times oppressed,
It here is tried and purified,
And hath in heaven its perfect rest:
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the harvest time of love is there."

On returning one evening from a stroll, just as the sun was quietly sinking in the west, and leaving behind him a long trail of saffron-tinted light in which every object was bathed and looked happy, reminding one of the merry and brilliant faces he had seen in the reflected gleam of the Christmas log, the writer observed two figures at some distance, standing on an eminence from which a spectator could easily catch a bird's-eye view of the village in which lay the writer's home.

On approaching the elevation the two figures seen in the distance turned out to be two friends, one a farmer in the neighbourhood, and the other an invalid relation, who was on a visit to the farm of his companion for the benefit of his

The invalid was a pupil in a London School of Art, and was a young man of great promise. His wasted cheek spoke of toil; his sparkling eye and beautifully formed mouth revealed genius and taste. On coming up to them the farmer was discoursing to his friend concerning different kinds of tillage, and the various breeds of sheep that could be profitably reared in the surrounding districts. To the shrewd business remarks of the farmer the young artist gave, or seemed to give respectful attention. But the writer had not long joined them before the artist with a smile upon his pallid cheek interrupted the farmer by exclaiming, "This scene would make a fine picture. old church with its spire pointing heavenwards, with the tombstones of the rude forefathers of the hamlet nestling round its feet, would form a nice middle ground. The old feudal castle in the distance, with its gray tower and as many swallows frisking round its ivied battlements as there are flies at this moment playing round your old hat, would pass for an indefinite and shady background. For accessories, let us see, we could have the cottages down there, with a flight of pigeons tumbling overhead in the sunlight; a few cattle grazing in the meadows; the windmill with his giant arms beating the air; the flour mill and its snowy roof, with its old waterwheel flinging its shadow against the moss-tufted gable; here and there an old man with bald head plying some easy task in the shade; a toiling team wending its way along the dusty road; and on the green no end of donkeys, geese, and children." Slapping the farmer on the shoulder, and with a merry laugh, "There," he exclaimed, "there's painting, poetry. and live stock for you without a moment's worry; what think ye, gentlemen?" To which the old farmer drilv replied, grasping his bearded chin between his finger and

thumb, "Very pretty language, Edmond; but it proves nothing, grows nothing, and breeds nothing." At which speech we laughed, and all three moved down towards the village.

Just before entering it there met you a small patch of greensward, a sort of playground for the children of the place; in the centre was a pond in which at the moment in question were a few ducks angling and supping; in the distance a donkey or two, with here and there an old horse quietly grazing; and in all directions merry groups of little children, and a sprinkling of lads engaged at leapfrog, cricket, and pitch-and-toss. reached the little common the writer touched the arm of the artist, and remarked as he pointed to a thick-set youth. "There, sir, in your village picture you had no such accessory as that." The youth in question was about sixteen years of age, and had only to be seen once never to be forgotten. His hair standing as erect over his dirty face as if he had seen a ghost, his garments in rags, his naked feet as full of scars as a butcher's block. "Aye," exclaimed the painter, "and he has an eye, too, like that of a hawk when watching the windings in the flight of its victim." "Yes," remarked the writer, "and it is a practised eye, too; it has been well trained for years in guiding its owner to many a meal, through many a fray, and from the hands of the police." Well might the artist be astonished at the appearance of that remarkable boy, but his appearance was not the most remarkable thing about him. In his heart lay passions wild and strong; sometimes in his words, and very often at his play, they would take fire, and sparkle and shine like wildfire. He had a ruling passion too, in its way rather inconvenient at times to his neighbours, but especially so to his companions, for this passion was neither more nor less than an unquenchable thirst for fun-practical fun with a

dash of genuine mischief in it. He was esteemed the best boxer, runner, leaper, and wrestler on the green; and when not at work, or in bed, he was sure to be in mischief; the neighbours say of him, "He lives to lark, and larks to live." Reader, that is the orphan son of drunken parents; and because of his leaping propensities he rejoices in the name of "Billy Spang," and because of his wretched circumstances he is best known by the name of "Poor Billy Spang."

With the appearance of this boy our young friend of the pencil was very much struck, and as we parted he could not help exclaiming, "I've seen the grotesque and the picturesque in many forms, in many lauds, and under peculiar circumstances; but never till to-night have I seen the grotesque and the picturesque blended in such an odd bit of flesh and blood. Why don't you sketch him in some of your magazines? He would make a continent stare.—Good night, sir; and when next you meet Sir Billy Spang, please do me the honour of a remembrance."—To the above simple incident the reader owes the following narrative.

How differently does the same object affect different individuals! A village with its population of immortal souls, surrounded by sloping hills and green fields, suggests to one mind only so many facilities for rearing crops and breeding cattle. To another it affords merely the elements for a picture, beauteous it may be and fair, of spires, towers, swallows, pigeons, water-wheels, windmills, old men, geese, and children, distributed according to taste and the approved rules of art. To a third how different are the thoughts that arise, and how very different the feelings awakened in his breast, on beholding such a scene! To him the souls of the place, the state before God of the souls of the place, cast into deep shadow every other object. In every man and woman he beholds a being born in thraldom to sin, and for whose freedom from its power, for one hour, the cattle on a thousand

hills, with thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil, would be an insufficient ransom. In each young soul at play on the village green he sees a "newborn rill just trickling from its mossy bed," beginning its course, and starting on its path along the vale of life to the ocean of eternity! Fain would he foretell, if he could, what rocks it shall have to overleap, through what rocks it shall have to tunnel its way ere it sparkle under the skies of another world; fain would he know if yet "the Man whose name is the Branch" had bathed in its waters and extracted their bitterness, and if that blood which flowed from Calvary had reached its stream. In such a scene he knows, events are developed, trials are endured, self-denial practised, and crimes perpetrated, which if transferred to an empire as their arena, and the actors crowned, would engage the attention of a world!

Yes, dear reader, often the angels of God in village lanes cross each other's path on their Master's business! Often do the harpers on the sea of glass strike their strings with rapture at the recital of the annals of their lowly poor; for Jesus by His Spirit often visits them, and puts the seal of the King of kings on the brow of many of their children. From among the lowly peasantry of England, in the great day of the Lord, will arise many an uncrowned king whose judgment-day will also be that of his coronation.

He who only knows his Redeemer by His stately goings in the sanctuary, or by His power as Ruler among the armies of heaven, knows Him not in some of the most striking aspects of His character. Few more affecting spectacles appear in the kingdom of grace than that of Jesus in His character of Shepherd pursuing, with mercy, the retreating footsteps of some village "Billy Spang," overtaking him, and at last leading him back in newness of life to the bosom of His Father.

CHAPTER II.

"The day is breaking, and heaven has put her torches out; The wolves have preyed, and look the gentle day, Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey."

YET Jim slumbers. Is he dead? he is so still. silent figure, as it rests against the door on the cold step, made of stone, and, by way of sign-post, to be included among the goods and chattels of the place? No sign-post is he-simply an immortal soul-only a husband and a father, dead drunk—that is all. Than flesh and blood and never-dying spirit, sterner stuff is not in all his nature. By way of change of place he has reached the door-step, because his last copper is spent, and all that was considered valuable about him now lies at the bottom of the till of the "Red Lion." All you see sitting there in the snappish morning air is the husk, according to "mine host," and the "Lion" swallowed the kernel over night. Such is the treatment, and such the "well-aired beds," for all penniless men at the above "noted house." But mine host of the "Lion" is not singular in his ways; far from it, honest man; he but follows the rules of the profession; he is but a representative of that distinguished trade to which he has the honour to belong.

In the neighbourhood of the metropolis there are certain villages and towns on the Thames that excel in beauty, are renowned in story, and famous for the contributions of their sons to the noble literature of England. Yet, nevertheless, these same villages, "old in story," have another kind of fame, in its character and power very different from the former. To some extent they have always been—but within the last century and a half to a very much greater extent—notorious for the accommodation they afford on every day of the week, but especially on the Sabbath, to the pleasure-seeking population of London, whose sports and pastimes in such places, when viewed in relation to the influence they exercise over the actors in them, are in their effects to be deplored.

At first sight it may not appear credible, but nevertheless, on reflection, will be found true, that these unhallowed assemblies and their amusements have done much in multiplying that forlorn race in our large towns known by the name of "Outcasts," and "Arabs of the City." The gay and giddy of our fathers' times, in the gardens, taverns, and sports of such places, wasted much of their substance, and still more of their life's little span; there, habits were formed and impressions made which refused to die with their owner, and have descended, a fatal heirloom, from sire to son, and are even now working in those children of disobedience who are the curse of our streets, and the very strength of There the gambler and blackleg plied their our slums. nefarious trade, acquiring a dexterity from practice, and an amount of daring from success, to counteract which, or at least to curb which, has cost our country more than money even precious blood.

Among their fields, in the shade of their long avenues, or in the gloom of their forests, a darker game than either of these, although bearing a fairer name, was often played, and which told with blasting influence on the people of these realms. In the gray dawn, at a little distance from

some of these villages, might be seen a party of men arrayed in slouched hat and long cloak, wending their way in silence to some secluded spot, leaving at the head of the more frequented paths leading to it a watcher; and hard by a postchaise, horses and jockey ready for instant flight. sharp report echoes through the wood, a puff of smoke struggles through the trees, and shortly the party appears; but now carrying in its midst, wrapped in a long cloak, the dead body of one of its number, which is huddled away in the conveyance. Guess you what it is—this deed of darkness? In the language of fashion it would be called a "pardonable murder," "an affair of honour," "a duel." In the language of common sense it would be described as a deed which sends a soul roughshod over the neck of that command which says. "Thou shalt not kill," into the presence of its God. In the language of Scripture it would be described as a shedding of blood, a deed to be punished by shedding the blood of him that did it. 'Tis murder! and ere the sound of the duellist's pistol took its place among the echoes, ere its smoke mingled with the clouds of heaven, and the victim's blood sank in the dust, they combined to form an impulse which at this moment, with baneful influence, dimples and wrinkles the But time would fail us to record surface of English society. how often and how long also, in these haunts of questionable pleasure, the footpad and highwayman, with impunity, carried on their trade of robbery and bloody adventure. Thank God, these days have nearly passed away, leaving behind them only their black record, which even now, like the wounded snake, may be traced by the slime it leaves behind.

Look at that chubby butcher lad, in his blouse, lolling on his block in the afternoon sun, his whole soul absorbed in that penny sheet. See that servant girl down in the area there, her uncombed head resting on her unwashed hands upon the window-sill, and her kitchen as if a hurricane had dashed through it. What draws her aside from duty and cleanliness? Only the same penny sheet—"A Romance in Real Life," and only one penny, to be continued in weekly numbers. A romance spun out of the lawless deeds of these same villages on the banks of the Thames, "old in story." And what harm in all this? ask many persons; these classes must have their literature, and being of a gross order of mind, there must be "a dash of the wild and a spice of the unclean to give it zest withal." Grant all this.

A few years have passed away, and one cold winter night after you and the family have retired to rest, your slumber is broken by what sounds in your ears like the starting of drawers and the wrenching of locks: is it a dream of the night, you ask yourself as you rub your eyes? It cannot be, it comes from the next room. One moment more, with the first weapon you can snatch you reach the landing, and a tall powerful man with craped face, felt shoes, a dark lantern dangling at his waist, and a jemmy in his hand, confronts you with the plain English speech, "Your property or your life." In the scuffle that follows, and just before he is secured, his mask falls from his face. How are you horrified to discover in the man of violence the butcher lad you had seen sunning himself on the block at his master's door, and greedily devouring the penny romance "with a dash of the wild and a spice of the unclean in it to give it zest withal." Ask him now what led him into the path of the destroyer, and he will point you to that same soulpoisoning sheet, which so painted vice as to allure him too near its fatal vortex; he was caught in its sweep, and now it has flung him up to the surface a finished blackguard, a man of violence and blood.

And, perhaps, we have only to turn down the next street to meet that servant girl, but a year or two ago at home in a respectable family, in the act of sowing or reaping the awful fruits of a fallen woman's life. Were you to ask her the first steps that led her to ruin, she would point you to the same penny romance, "with a dash of the wild and a spice of the unclean to give it zest withal."

And let us never forget that the materials out of which these tales of blood and lust have been formed, have been mainly gathered from the scenes and sports of other days. common among many of our river villages. Woe to him who earns his bread by letting loose among the uneducated masses of our land these fiery flying serpents of the press! Often is this prayer on the lip of the labourer in reformatory, prison, and refuge, as he comes upon a fresh victim, "O that all who have suffered by them were armed with a lash, and had assembled before them these anonymous venders of soul-poison, that they might flog them beyond our gates to some desolate land where the wild beasts of the desert lie, whose houses are full of doleful creatures, where owls dwell and satyrs dance; a land where the wild beasts of the islands cry in its desolate houses, and dragons in its pleasant palaces; a land whose time is near to come, and whose days shall not be prolonged."

"But hush," saith the Lord, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay. Continue ye to point the bitten soul to Him who was lifted on the cross, in looking to whom the weary find rest, and the wounded cease to die. There is a day coming when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ."

At one of these villages the persons mentioned in the following narrative lived, and several of them were born. The village of Little K—— is distributed over a large area of flat country, at the remote borders of which it begins to undulate and rise into gentle slopes. It is composed of about a dozen lines of houses of varying length. Some of these lines are composed of houses entirely new, and others of houses old and new.

The mixed architecture gives the whole a picturesque appearance, and blends in the mind of the spectator the past with the present; here and there the eye falls upon some old pile whose blood-red bricks, cornered windows, diamond panes, and solemn walls have seen the days that passed over good Queen Bess; whose ample rooms have echoed with the thundering tread of Cromwell's Ironsides, and sheltered the heads of some who rejoiced at the arrival of the Prince of Orange. Alone in position and style, they suggest to one's mind some of those worthies occasionally met with in the streets of London, arrayed in a costume sufficiently antiquated to link the present with two or three of the generations gone before. Little K---- seen at a distance and from an eminence very much resembles an army in review, broken up into line and square; its party-coloured building materials give the variety of uniform, and the haze of household smoke suggests the use of firearms. The distant back-ground spreads into gently rising grounds, crowned with trees; and through the centre runs the main road, lined on either side with the rich man's villa and the poor man's cottage.

On the north side flows the Thames; and between the road and the river, extending east and west for three miles with the breadth of a mile, lies a plain of verdant fields. In one corner stands the parish church, with its old clock silently noting the flight of time; almost in the centre of the plain, not very far from the river, is a huge old pile of building of the time of Charles II., with a union-jack flaunting

round its staff. Immediately before the door, swinging and creaking in its frame, is a sign on which is painted a fierce red lion, which gives name to the house. A little to the left is an immense wooden shed, with a planked pathway down to the river. In this shed, high and dry, are collected pleasure boats of every build in repute among water excursionists; in the distance some are afloat, and at anchor, waiting to be hired. From the above sketch the reader may form a clear idea of the scene of the succeeding narrative.

CHAPTER III.

"By all the happy see in children's growth,
That undeveloped flower of budding years,
Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,
Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest tears."

In a cottage of Little K——, and in one of the most ancient, Jim, the hero of our narrative, saw the light; in the surrounding fields and on the muddy banks of the Thames he grew up a hardy child of nature. His parents were of the very lowest order of the people. At the time our narrative opens they held the situation of outdoor servants to the Red Lion; and in the discharge of their duties they were assisted by the members of their family, Jim, Bob, and Margaret. The reader will at once observe, this whole family belonged to that miserable race of beings who, from choice, pursue an employment that robs them of their Sabbath! Physically, they denied themselves that repose enjoyed by the humblest brute; morally, they steeled the heart against every influence that could lift it up and keep it fresh.

And what an employment for such a family on such a day! For a few shillings a week they performed the drudgery of carrying from the bar of the Red Lion the spirits and beer consumed by the uproarious boat-parties and donkey-racers that frequented the neighbouring fields, from Monday morning till Sunday night, the long summer through!

Imagine the influence, on these five souls, of such work for a period of years! Amid the low language, obscenity, and brawls of these crowds, they lived, moved, and had their being for the greater part of their lives! Picture to yourself the moral condition of the unhappy five! As a family they were unclean in their lives; in their conduct, brawlers and drunkards; in the sight of God they were clouds without rain—trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

In due time Bob, with his father and mother, fell under the drunkard's doom; and in due time they were carried to a pauper's grave in the old churchyard, where forgotten they await the morning of the resurrection, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung" by surviving friends.

They discharged their duties according to the following division of labour:—When not required for active service in the field,—that is, when father, mother, and Margaret were equal to the task of distributing the beer and spirits among the people in the grounds,—then Bob and Jim superintended the hiring and floating of the fleet of pleasure-boats belonging to the establishment. The fighting—at least, most of the great fights arising out of such employment—fell to Jim. How he did his duty in this department may be gathered from the traditions of the place, and seen in the deformed faces of a few of its people.

Old Peter, the father, was a man remarkable for quaint sayings, and occasional bursts of sly humour. He was little of stature, and on one side of his nose was a huge wart; he looked at you through two cunning, twinkling, gray eyes, which, when touched with cold, would discharge scalding water in quantity sufficient to furrow the old man's cheeks. He wore knee-breeches, fastened with buckles; he was very partial to snow-white stockings and patent leather slippers. In the pouch of his little white apron he carried his screw and his coppers; and in an inner pouch the gra-

tuities of his friends. In disposition, he was as amiable as a Skye terrier; and on his feet as nimble as a hare. We had almost omitted to add that Peter, at home or abroad, protected the few grey hairs that refused to quit his head by a cap of cat's fur: in the crown of which sparkled a big brass button; and to defend his little eyes from the sun, his cap was always provided with a peak of enormous size.

The spouse of Peter was a tall old woman, spare, gaunt, and bony, with very long arms. What her hands grasped they held like a vice; and the story ran, she employed her nails for various purposes, but in nothing so effectually as in teaching old Peter in particular, and the family in general, that they were made of flesh and blood, and we suppose she left them to infer for themselves they were mortal.

Bob was a big, coarse-featured man, and a bully: Jim used to say, "he had the voice of a trumpet and the pluck of a pigeon." When about to make a quarrel with any one, he was always sure correctly to inform himself as to Jim's "whereabouts" in the first place. If reported drunk and asleep, the affair was put off, and kept simmering till the "big brother" was about again.

Margaret was a woman with a short neck and a corpulent bust, a little above the common size, strong of muscle, exceedingly open to impulse from the bottle, violent in temper, and of easy virtue.

A more affecting sight was seldom witnessed in Little K—— than the return of Peter and his family from the killing work of the Red Lion just as the night of Sunday was fading away before the gray dawn of morning. There they are, waddling along one after the other, like a string of ducks just retired from the water for the repose of the night: sometimes they speak, sometimes they will not, and sometimes they cannot; for the toils and indulgence of

the day have deprived them of the use of most of their faculties, leaving simply the power of walking—and even it was characterised by so many deviations from the general rule as scarcely to merit the name.

On such occasions an amusing vet a melancholy scene was the opening of the cottage door by old Peter. illustrious namesake, he was considered by the whole family to have the sole right of the key: in this fashion he admitted his family and himself into his little heaven—it might have been more aptly called by another name. After all had reached the door in safety, he would proceed to open it in the usual way; but on such occasions, in the usual way, the door would not open. If it happened on one of their speechless nights-and of these they had many-Peter would look up to the skies, supposing the difficulty to arise from the darkness of the night-if, happily, they had as much visual power left to see the stars, and could collect among them a sufficient number of words to convey to him the fact that the heavenly bodies were not at fault; then believing that the old keyhole had been closed up, and a new one in another part of the door opened in its stead by some person or persons unknown, he would change his tactics, and retiring backwards a few paces in a stooping position, he would place the key in a line with his eye. After standing some time in this attitude, and without altering it, he would rush towards the door, shouting, "I've found it—I've found it!" The discovery was generally followed by the prostration of Peter, and the delegation of the power of the key to another. The keyhole ceremony was seldom concluded without the prostration of more than Peter; for before all was over they began to look for keyholes in one another's faces, and before the inspection was finished they were all brought to the same

level, and then the heel of Jim's boot opened the door of Bramble Cottage.

Reader, often does God speak to the children of men from the step of a door. We read that, on one occasion, "He smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door." The blood of the Passover was sprinkled on the door-post. Dagon was found broken on the step of his temple door. Does it not strike you that a solemn lesson may be learned from that group of drunkards standing speechless and blinking in the pale moonlight on the doorstep of Bramble Cottage? Inquire who made thee to differ, if a difference between your soul and theirs does exist. Give to God the glory, and with lifted heart and bended knee sing—

"Grace first inscribed my name
In God's eternal book:

'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.

"Grace led my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet
While pressing on to God."

Pleasure seeker, turn you also an eye to these five nodding figures; and in their awful condition, many degrees below that of the brutes which perish, behold the price of your amusements—a family in ruins! They shall perish in their sins, but their blood will a righteous God require of you! Truly their misery was the fruit of their own acts and deeds; but, Sabbath pleasure-seeker, you made the trade necessary that first led them astray; you first flung the sand in the air that smote them with blindness.

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One morning in the beginning of summer the writer was passing along the road that skirts the eastern extremity of birds and one or two labourers were all that were stirring. The hedges and flowers were beaded with dew, and a healthy freshness filled the air: the light was broadening into day. and masses of woolly smoke hung round a few chimneys -life and business were just turning out for the work of the day. The writer, in passing into one of the lanes, had his attention called to two men standing in a very peculiar attitude in a secluded corner. Between them stood a horse. and each rested his head on the neck of the animal. his mane seemed to rise the accents of prayer,—one prayed while the other made the responses. On the writer approaching them they raised their heads, wished him good morning, shook him by the hand, and he passed on. Though very early, both were dressed for the day.

Reader, mark these two men; each in his own sphere is a little peculiar, and in the subsequent career of Jim each played a distinguished part. In dealing with masses of men they wield a power that works like a spell, and for years their words have been law to hundreds. One of them is Jno. Power, Esq., the head of a large commercial house in On 'Change few men stand higher; there his London. word is looked upon as a bond signed and scaled. He is a man about the middle size, thin and straight, always plainly attired, generally in black, and at any hour in all the day has the appearance of having just passed from the dressing-He is sparing of speech, seldom if ever uttering one word more than is necessary, and consequently, in company, is more an observer than a talker. In dealing with men he has a kind of instinct in catching the leading feature of their nature, and so placing them as to work with most effect. He is a decided Christian; with him Christ is all; he buys, sells, and does business for Christ's sake; and in promoting his Master's glory spends thousands. Most of his leisure is spent in corresponding with his missionaries, whom he entirely supports; in visiting the sick, or in presiding over prayer-meetings composed almost wholly of the poorest of the people.

The other, who worshipped with him on the morning in question, was George Mount. He stands at the head of Mr. Power's staff of home missionaries. In stature a shade below the middle size, broadly built, of a sandy complexion, with a countenance formed after the German type, its most striking features being eyes that roll to any corner, and on a pinch can so hide the pupil as to present only the white, and a large mouth filled with milky teeth. In manner he is soft—downy soft. He excels most men in expressing the language of pity, especially in its whine; in presenting a case he is unequalled in putting forth that side of it in which he is most interested, in toning down and covering with a soft hand the side in which he feels least interest. He is a man with an under current in his soul, which never forsakes its channel however the wind may blow. also a very delicate sense of the equilibrium of things; so perfect in him is this power, that at all times he can silently trim between opposing influences so as to avoid coming into collision with either. He is known in the circles where he labours by the names of "Good Body," but more frequently by that of "Crawler." One always feels more inclined to listen to him than to confide in him.

CHAPTER IV.

"How calm, how beautiful comes on The stilly hours, when storms are gone; When warring winds have died away, And clouds, beneath the glancing ray, Melt off, and leave the land and sea Sleeping in bright tranquillity."

A FEW hours after his early walk the writer, in the ordinary routine of business, met Mount, the missionary.

"Well, George," exclaimed the writer, "whatever were you and Mr. Power about this morning so early, in a place so secluded, and in an attitude so unusual; why, you looked like a group of statuary!"

Rubbing his hands and showing his teeth, he replied, "Ah, sir, we were about our Master's business."

"Your Master's business?" retorted the writer. "But the horse, George—about whose business was he—eh? That you and Mr. Power were so employed, I believe; but it does seem strange work for Mr. Power's Charley; were not you and his master praying as you leant on his neck this morning? At almost every variety of labour I have seen horses, in almost every sort of place have I met them; but till this morning, in a meeting for prayer, and as a leaning-post for two men in an act of worship, I never did see one. Charley looked so solemn, too, compared with his appearance in general, especially when, with arched neck, his dark chest covered with patches of snow-like foam, and the sparks, like fire-flies, dancing round his heels, he carries

good Mr. Power to London town. Mount, do let me into the secret of the whole affair?"

With upturned eye and well-rubbed fists he turned to the writer, and admitted the whole affair "was strange, passing strange; but, sir, on some hearts the things of the kingdom do press so heavily, and to some they are so dear, as frequently to cause them to cry out by reason of the burden in any place, and offer the incense of prayer at any altar. Yes, sir, a praying man, in the hour of need, may turn his horse's neck into an altar, and send forth his cry to the ear of God through the hair of his horse's mane."

"I doubt it not," responded the writer; "but were you really praying—that is the question?"

"We were, sir, and earnestly too," answered Mount.

"Was the subject of prayer such as a stranger might intermeddle with, and do no harm?" inquired the writer; "if so, George, I should very much like to know it."

"Sir," replied Mount, "the things of the kingdom are not private property, they belong unto us and to our Here, after the usual performance of rubbing, smiling, and sighing, in soft flowing words he gave the following explanation :-- "Last night, in conversation with Mr. Power, it was laid upon my spirit to bring before him, and particularly to press home, the claims of a new field of labour I have just entered. In such a light was he led to view the new effort, so deep the impression made on his mind by my simple narrative, and so touched were his feelings with my toils, that tears filled his eyes, and in the night watches sleep left his pillow. As I expected, according to custom, when anything troubles him, he called upon me early, the conversation was renewed, and as we sauntered along the road, it pleased the Lord again to reveal the importance of this new sphere of labour to both our minds, and to give us

a glimpse of the rich harvest of souls that might be reaped in it; yet accompanied with so much personal danger to them that laboured as to fill us both with fear. Under such circumstances, what could we do but pray? A vessel more than full must run over; when you passed us our hearts had overflowed, and we were refreshing ourselves with prayer. We leant on Charley's neck without design; but, sir, any port, says the heart, in a storm of emotion."

"But where," inquired the writer, of George, "may this magnificent field of labour lie?"

"Not far off," was the reply; "a little to the westward there, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Red Lion." For a moment his feelings seemed to overcome him. After becoming composed he resumed, "Sad thought, sir, that so near us there should be hundreds of souls sitting in gross darkness, laughing as it were on their very coffin-lids, their souls with sin dark as the skin of the Ethiopian, and their tongues set on fire of hell. O dear, O dear, does it not rend your heart? Mine is rent many times a day, and is compelled to exclaim with the prophet, 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain' of the people of Little K---. Yet, sir, though cast down, I am not in despair; even now the shadows are fleeing, for good Mr. Power is coming out 'to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the mighty.' Yes, sir, I believe ere long the bow of mercy will rise over that Dead Sea of souls."

After this burst of emotion he remained silent and motionless, a very petrefaction of devotion. After allowing a considerable time to elapse, the writer interrupted his meditations by saying, "But, George, you said something about danger to life and limb; what do you mean by that?"

Somewhat surprised at the question, Mount replied, "Are

you not aware, sir, that he who ventures to preach in the open air at Little K—— is in personal danger?"

"From whom, or from what?" inquired the writer, somewhat puzzled.

"From men, dogs, and brickbats," still amazed, answered George.

"Explain yourself, Mount, do," exclaimed the writer.

To which question he replied, "Why, sir, no sooner does the servant of the gentle Master attempt to preach at Little K.—, than the dogs are set a barking, if not of their own accord, the boys of the place tease them till they do so; and if this mode of annoyance is not successful, a few brick-bats are added. But, sir, this is not all; very serious annoyance is occasionally given by many of the hangers-on about the Red Lion, especially by one called Jim, or the "Crusher," assisted by his brother Bob, and one little fellow who follows both as if he were their shadow, known by the name of 'Billy Spang.'

"When a preacher is announced the landlord of the Lion gives the Crusher the hint and some spirits; he knows what is expected of him, and does it to the letter. On such occasions he will run at you with open mouth, so strong is he that he could make chair, Bible, and preacher spin before him like leaves on the breeze. Should the preacher remonstrate he will roar him down, or knock him down; and he is generally surrounded by such a number of pestilent fellows, too, that all is done and contrived so as entirely to conceal him who does the mischief. 'To see the Crusher at his games with the preacher,' I hear the crowd often say, 'is as good as a play.' Nay, sir, it is even mooted that not unfrequently the master of the Red Lion will whisper among his Sunday customers by way of joke that if they stay long enough they may enjoy the sight

of 'drawing the badger by terrier, Jim;' meaning, that shortly that wicked man will annoy the servant of God. More, sir: the very last time I made the attempt, he lifted me, chair, Bible, and all, on to the very steps of the Red Lion, amid tumults of laughter from the surrounding crowd."

"But, George, be not dismayed, that will cease in time," remarked the writer.

"Sir," replied Mount, "I fear them not, I'm determined to lift up my voice for my Master like a trumpet, yea, to cry aloud, and spare not, yea, to turn my face upon them as if it were a flint; yes, sir, though little of stature, and the name of the foe be 'Legion,' He who can use weak things to confound the strong will bring even me off more than conqueror."

"What does Mr. Power purpose doing to strengthen your hands in this new effort?" asked the writer.

"Sir," responded Mount, "with his usual munificence, he intends buying the old school-house in Middle Lane, and turning it into a preaching station; but he proposes more, he intends also to open a Ragged School for the neglected and destitute children of the place; and, besides a staff of teachers, to try if possible to establish a regular staff of visitors, composed of ladies and gentlemen, whose duty it will be to visit from house to house, and if possible to draw the people out to the various services held in the school-room. Thus, sir, a well in the desert is opened, and the bondwoman and her son shall not die, but may yet be restored to the Master from whom they wandered. I may also add, the honour of being the first regular preacher to the poor of the place has been laid on me; now, sir, that benighted district is my parish."

CHAPTER V.

"In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the silver cup;
I see his grey eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—grey eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear, and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad."

ONE Sunday evening, a few months after the morning meeting with Mr. Power and George Mount, the writer had not long returned from his class which met in the after-He had just closed his shutters, placed himself before a blazing fire, and was sipping a cup of tea, while he mused on the work of the day; his eyes dreamily fixed on the flickering flame, in which there appeared a number of little faces looking up into his. They seemed the very faces of the children that he had been teaching that afternoon. A solemn afternoon it had been, the lesson being taken from the words: "When I see the blood I will pass over you;" and God by his grace had been stirring up their young hearts as an eagle stirreth up her nest. The writer trusts more than one youthful spirit that day in its first upward flight rested not its weary wing till it perched on the brink of that "fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins."

As the eye which for some time gazes on one particular

colour to the exclusion of every other, becomes so affected as to behold that colour diffused everywhere, and to see every individual object that comes before it in that colour only, so sometimes is the teacher's heart affected. Whereever he goes he sees only the faces of his young charge; they seem to look down upon him from the flowers in the paper on the walls; they seem to look up to him from the patterns in the carpet; and sometimes they even seem to stare at him from among the flames of the grate. with the faithful pastor; wherever he wanders, he, too, feels himself in an endless picture gallery, each picture in which resembles some soul in that flock, for every sheep of which he will one day have to render an account to God. Both feel that until the Angel of the covenant, poised on healing wing, has hovered over class and flock, and exclaimed, "I see the blood," nothing is done. Till that is done, neither have a passover in its year, a land of promise at its journey's close, nor will either feast on the milk and honey of the goodly land that is afar off. Reader, has that Angel with orbed eye scanned the portal of your own soul? If so, was the whisper heard, as He overshadowed you, "I see the blood?" Then continue your labours of love, and pursue afresh all your works of faith; you, in due time also, shall see the blood, and you and your little ones shall go free.

While thus musing before the fire, the little faces still full in view, the writer was called back to a consciousness of earthly things by some one gently tapping at his parlour door. The Abigail of the establishment opened it, and announced the arrival of old Thomas Scott, who was no sooner named than he appeared. "Old Father Firm," as the teachers styled him, was a man between sixty and seventy years of age, and had known the Lord for half a century. As soon as he entered the room it was filled with the sound

of his powerful rolling voice. Seizing me by both hands, as was his wont, he exclaimed, "Well, my son, how do ye do? Been at work this afternoon? Held the Master of Assemblies well up? Brought him and the 'Wisps' near each other? Any sparks flying, eh?" All these questions were put by him in a very much shorter period than it has taken to write them.

Father Firm is a little above the middle size: he has square shoulders and a fine broad chest, indicating great strength in his younger years; and although far advanced in life, his eve is not dim, nor his natural strength much abated. Time, as with hoar frost, has powdered his raven locks and shaggy eyebrows, and near each eye has planted a crow's foot, and marked his manly countenance with many furrows; his lips are more indicative of firmness than delicacy. All his mental powers are strong, well balanced, and perform their work under the guidance of pure principles and good common sense; vigour, therefore, rather than polish, is the prevailing feature of his mind, disposing him to sympathize more with the sublime in nature, grace. and human character, than with the beautiful or the tender in either. When any important subject engages his mind the mental process is nowhere so visible as in his eye, which, during the time of thinking and comparing, seems to expand and glitter as the matter unfolds itself to him; the process once finished, he relapses for a few moments into a revery, from which he quietly emerges, and having come to a decision, his motto is "Death or victory!" Dignified in manner, yet humble as a child; warm, right warm of heart. yet cool and deliberate; a man of large views, and one who deeply interests himself in all the concerns and the movements of the Church of Christ; to the enemies of the Cross, kind, yet reserved and caustic in speech; to the

ignorant and inquiring he is soft as summer, and sometimes even dissolves into tenderness. He belongs to that class of men from which God in former times selected the Puritans who expired in Smithfield, the Covenanters who bled among the hills of Scotland, and those witnesses who were hunted among the valleys of Piedmont.

On taking a chair and a sup of warm tea, he was invited to make himself at home for the evening.

"I can't do that to-night," he replied; "I have a matter on hand, my son, and you must guide me through the lanes before it can be accomplished. To-night, boy, you must be eye and staff to old Thomas."

"But," remarked the writer, "the night is dark and stormy; there is something spiteful in the whistle of the wind, and it would grieve me were you to suffer from exposure."

"Look ye here, boy," said Thomas, "in these old muscles there is yet a good deal of rope left. As for the wind, we'll march along bravely while it whistles; the wind never injures Thomas Scott, we're old acquaintances. Many a night, when I was in business, I used to rattle along in my trap with the wind for my only companion; often when it rose high and the dust was flying, I've thought of that old noble verse—'And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; vea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.' Yes, sir, the winds are his coursers; and sometimes, when alighting from my humble chaise, and wiping the dust off my hat, a feeling of sublimity would steal over me as I remembered how it came there, even from the feet of the horses of Him who rides through the heavens. Come on, my son, there are lessons in the blast, and glory in the dust of the road. when it falls from the skirts of Jehovah as He rides through the skies on the coursing winds."

Here, as he spoke, he struck his stick on the floor, a thrill of youthful vigour gushed through his frame, and the light of other days kindled in his eye; his old furrowed face looked beautiful. Recollections of roadside scenes hallowed by the presence of Jesus, and frequent communings with God as He did fly on the wings of the midnight blast, made the old man eloquent, and for the moment he became young again. All solicitude for his welfare sank under an intenser anxiety to know what it could be that tempted one so wrinkled with age to come abroad in a night so cold.

"Well, Thomas," exclaimed the writer, "what can I do for you, and on what errand can you possibly be so bent?"

"Sir," replied the old saint, "one thing I wish you to do for me is, to lend me your young eyes for the night. as for the errand that brings me out on a night so stormy and so cold, it is simply this: I heard some time ago that my friend and neighbour, Mr. Power, through one of his missionaries, has unfurled the banner of the Cross in Middle Lane, near the Red Lion, and is doing battle for the Lord among the harpies of the water-side. To see with my own eyes how this enterprise fares, and to breathe over it my humble 'God speed' before I die—that, boy, is my errand. You know how much pain of heart that Red Lion and its accursed brood have cost me. Often have they caused my old blood to boil, and in secret my eyes to run over with tears, when I beheld them spread themselves over our river, and with their ungodly deeds pollute our silent lanes. Earnestly have I cried unto the Lord for one hour of the vigour of my youth, that I might rush among them with an open Gospel, and in trumpet tones proclaim in their ears the severity, the tenderness, and all the goodness of the great God and our Saviour. But, sir, my way is not His way, and I am pleased. Prayer has been answered, the Cross is in the field, and before I go hence I would like to see it."

The writer was so impressed with the earnest and mournfully firm manner of the old man, that he at once replied, "As far as I am concerned, Thomas, you may at once command me; you shall have eyes and feet too."

We immediately prepared for starting. Father Firm had tied his Indian silk handkerchief over his snow-white cravat. and buttoned himself to the chin, and the writer, believing all to be ready, moved towards the door. "Stop," cried Thomas, and on turning round the writer found the old man on his knees, deeply engaged in prayer. The dying world was grasped in that old man's prayer; and oh that the world had been present to witness the old Jacob of Little K- wrestling with his God in its behalf. On rising he seemed slightly agitated, and his cheeks were wet with Calmly wiping his face, and readjusting his Indian handkerchief, he struck the floor with his staff, and then said to the writer, "Now, my son, lead the way into the night." It was an old-fashioned October night; it bit your cheek, and whistled in your ear while it did so. Little conversation passed between us as we walked along, for the old man was fully engaged with his own thoughts and with his heavenly Father. Occasionally a stray passage of Scripture fell from his lips as he turned his face to the sky. The writer could not help thinking the old man's sun was nearing its decline, and that he was looking on its last gleams as it descended towards that line in the horizon of the believer's life. where it touches the sea of light which laves the shores of the heavenly land, and is lost in light inaccessible and full of glory.

After a journey of about half an hour we reached the bottom of Middle Lane, in which stood the room rented by Mr. Power as a Mission Station. After entering the lane

we had but little difficulty in finding the house. Round its doorway stood about a dozen ragged men and lads indulging in all manner of noisy jokes, and from across the fields in our rear came sounds of the unholy revels at the Red Lion; and while standing at the school door one could distinctly hear there were several attempts to upset the worship inside. As these sounds fell on old Thomas's ear he began gradually to withdraw from immediate communion with his God, and become alive to the scene around him, and he did so uttering these words, "Ay, Lord, the wail of slavery, and the song of freedom, that will do, my old heart leaps with joy. ice is broken. In due time Jehovah will triumph gloriously! O for a season of the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." On reaching the doorstep we were hailed with anatches of low songs, low slang, and coarse jokes. firm manly tone old Thomas inquired of the bystanders what they were doing there, and why they were not inside.

"Oh, sir," answered Billy Spang, who was one of them, "we're a-doing the grinder outside, and the Crusher with his mates are a-doing it inside,—that's all, old 'un."

"My man," retorted old Father Firm, at the same time laying his hand on Billy's shoulder, "did you ever hear of any other doorstep on which men and devils meet, a-doing the grinder in a darker night than this—in outer darkness—eh? You're a-doing the grinder for fun—they're a-doing it because they cannot help it, with weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, too. You won't go in to hear of mercy—they want to go in, but it's too late. A verse of a little song which I learned when I was less than you says—

"There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains,
Where sinners must with devils dwell
In darkness, fire, and chains."

And, lads, as sure as there's a God in heaven, if you don't take care you'll do the grinder there:—and, let me tell you, it's hard to grind among everlasting burnings."

At the close of these remarks, Billy Spang, looking the very incarnation of impudence, shouted, "Ain't the old 'un 'cute! well up in the Old Book—knows every verse of the brimstone parts. Chaps, he's a-dodging us—he's getting up a meeting outside on the sly; we'll all be a-prayering on our marrow-bones in a trice, and the Crusher will have the laugh of us. I'll tell you what it is, old 'un,—you must go inside with your soft goods."

Thomas still held him fast, and was not in the least disconcerted by all that had passed, and to Billy's impertinence firmly but kindly replied, "Ah, my boy, you don't know the Old Book,—here's a verse for you without a grain of brimstone in it at all: 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." But just as old Thomas was proceeding to explain to Billy that verse, the hymn they had been singing inside was suddenly stopped, or rather drowned, by a burst of wild laughter. Again the hymn rises up and prevails; once more it is overwhelmed, and cat-calls, screams, and laughter fill the room. The old man was stirred in spirit; he could stand it no longer, and so applied his stick to the door as to cause it to be speedily opened. Such was the pressure from behind, that we were carried from the door to the back wall of the room; and right glad was Mount to see us.

CHAPTER VI.

"Keep pushing, 'tis wiser
Than sitting aside,
And dreaming and sighing
And waiting the tide.
In life's earnest battle
They only prevail
Who daily march onward,
And never say fail!"

THE room was full to suffocation. Chaos ruled supreme, and a spirit of evil brooded over the scene. An atmosphere of animal heat played upon your face and all round you, reminding one of the Black Hole of Calcutta: four gas pendants filled the place with a blaze of light. Mount and his friends occupied a platform at the far end; and they looked as men look who have reached their "wits' end," for they were sore amazed, and their faces streamed with perspiration. The audience occupied the body of the room, and sat on forms running right across it, leaving a narrow passage on one side the whole length of it; three benches occupied by ragged children of both sexes stood immediately in front of the platform. Any attempt on the part of the preacher to approach the desk was the signal for the children to advance in skirmishing order, and conduct their evolutions with all kinds of noise; while the people behind

evidently enjoyed the fun, for in no part of the audience was one serious face to be seen.

In a corner at one end of the room sat the Crusher, the very impersonation of Evil, and surrounded by a body of maliciously-disposed young men: to them the Crusher was all-in-all, and his word was law. Such a lawgiver! There he sits, nearly drunk, a mass of unwashed flesh and uncombed hair; what of soul is in him moves in his frame as a tiger in its cage, his hat awry, one eye blackened and bruised from his last fight, and scarcely a ray of intelligence visible in his brutish countenance. The only effort of life of which he was capable on the present occasion was to utter, in a grunting key interspersed with drunken sobs, "Go it, young 'uns—go it!" But such a command from lips so illustrious was re-echoed by his companions, immediately caught up by the youngsters in front, and by them carried out to the letter.

Father Firm during this confusion leant on the arm of the writer, who could distinctly feel, as it were, a current of energy coursing along the old man's arm and playing among his fingers, which kept increasing in their grasp as the uproar deepened. He could bear it no longer, and whispered to himself, "Ah, I see the Adversary intends that this affair of outposts should expand in its rage till it becomes a pitched battle, in which the field is to be lost or won. Is it to be my Lord, or the devil? In this place, this night, my Saviour shall be exalted. May God grant it!"

As these words fell from his lips, he hastily withdrew his arm from that of the writer, and the old man coolly walked up to the desk, on which the tumult became awful. Heedless of the noise, he bowed a moment or two in prayer. While so engaged, Billy Spang shouted, "Daddy's gone to

sleep—wake him up!" This was the signal for every child to make his right arm go like that of a street organist, and at the same time to utter the most unearthly noise. Undisturbed by anything that was going on around, Thomas quietly rose from his knees, freed his neck from its India wrapper, and laid aside his top coat. This done, with great natural dignity he took his place at the desk, and placidly surveyed the whole assembly, looking every part of it full in the face for several moments. Silence gradually prevailed, and soon every eye turned towards him.

"Water ahead! water ahead!" were the first words that escaped his lips. Like a thunder-peal his sonorous voice rolled over the audience, and filled the place: the people were astonished, and the little ones looked upthey were afraid. Turning to Mount and his companions, he cried, "Arise ye, cry aloud, lift up your voices like a trumpet and shout, 'There is water ahead! the fountain of God is hard by!' And you, ye sweating walls and mouldering beams, take up the cry, 'There is water ahead! this people must not die.' But hark! the great Redeemer hath joined in the cry: men, women, and little ones, give ear to that voice from the sky-'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money. Come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' O man, O woman, do arise and run, drink life to your souls and death to your sins. Come, little ones, give us your hands; Jesus calls you; come to the living waters—do!" Here he paused, his furrowed cheeks wet with tears; the whole assembly was moved as one man-even the Crusher stared, and the little fragment of mind left in him looked through its glazed eyes as if IT even had been startled, and had come to reconnoitre what was going on in front. The old man had triumphed, and

felt that for the rest of the evening the meeting was all his own.

Leaning in an easy manner over the desk, in a subdued voice he thus continued his address:--" Friends, we read in books of travel, that when a party of colonists are passing through some portions of the land in which they intend to live, the supply of water sometimes runs short; and if miles intervene between them and more water, it is death to all! Fearing such an occurrence, they try to provide against it in the following way:—The strongest men of their company are sent forth in all directions in little parties of two or three. When they discover water, their duty is to raise the cry 'Water ahead!' The party next to the discoverers takes up the cry, and repeats it; and so it is repeated all along the line of men till the cry is heard by all the people, who immediately shout with joy, in one huge voice, 'Water ahead!' They keep up the cry till the surrounding woods and mountains catch the sound; and they, too, repeat it in echoes for miles around. Then the whole people strike their tents, and in a body march forward, keeping up the sound. and turning it into a chorus, till the spring or river is But all are not able to walk—nay, so far gone are some of them for want of water that they die; others have their tongues cleaving to the roof of their mouths, and their eyes tinged with blood;—a few sometimes go mad! In the march forward the strong help the weak; others are so far gone that they have to be carried on the backs of their friends; and the mad are guarded and led. Thus arranged, the whole multitude advances through the woods and among the hills till all have reached the place of waters. Then they drink deep: their diseased limbs become whole, the dying live, and the sorrows of all have an end.

"Friends, your souls are in the state of these colonists;

they are dying for want of water! Yet why will you die? There is a fountain opened for you, to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for unclean-Some of us have gone ahead, reached this fountain, and drunk of its waters. I have found it, for one; and ever since that time it has been my custom to shout among thirsty souls, 'Water ahead!' I heard this cry come across these fields but the other day, and I desired to prolong the sound. I am doing so now. Do you hear the cry? The blindness, the madness, and the death that arise from the thirst of the soul are common diseases among you; oh, how terrible must your case be! The great God breaks the silence of these skies, and utters in your ears the same blessed cry—'Water ahead!' Listen to his words: 'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money. Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Hereupon followed one of the simplest yet most touching expositions of this passage ever given to any people. There was not one but appeared to feel it deeply.

After finishing his address he fell upon his knees, and thus prayed:—"Oh my God, Thou hast cried in the ears of this people, there is 'water ahead!' Many of them are dying within sight of the very fountain. Oh, send forth Thy Spirit into the midst of them; let the thirst of their souls so rage within them, that a cry for water shall rise from every heart: like the hunted deer panting for the water-brook, so let every soul under the guidance of Thy Spirit seek the river of the water of life, and there bathe till every limb throbs with a life that will never die, and each rise out of its wave a new creature in Christ Jesus.—Amen, and amen."

On rising from his knees, with great solemnity of manner

he once more approached the desk, and said to the people— "And now, my friends, look me in the face. I'm an old man, and stricken in years; you may never see my face again in the flesh. Come, shake hands with me over this fountain's brim, take me for a brother before we part: but remember, if nothing will persuade you to drink, I at least am free from your blood. You know this night, at any rate, and from God's own lips, that there is water ahead for each thirsty soul, and free of expense too. All may approach just as they are! If you die, your blood be on your own heads—it is not on these hands; and when I am called to depart to that place where the 'glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby,' may the last words on my lips be, just as my weary soul disappears amidst the light of glory, 'Water ahead!' Now let us sing and part:-

"I thirst, thou wounded Lamb of God,
To wash me in Thy cleansing blood,
To dwell within Thy wounds; then pain
Is sweet, and life or death is gain."

And they did sing with all their hearts; even the Crusher, it was reported, stammered through the tune. At the close of the service, many as they passed old Thomas blessed him with tears in their eyes; and far along the roads and lanes you could distinctly hear the young people shouting "Water ahead!" The whole neighbourhood appeared to be roused.

After the last of the people had left the room, Thomas turned round with a smile, and said to Mount, "Sir, you'll excuse me when I say hedgehogs are not to be caught with silk gloves, neither can nettles be crushed with the naked hand."

"May I ask what you mean, sir, by hedgehogs and nettles?" inquired Mount.

"I mean," responded Thomas, "those men, women, and children we've been addressing to-night. Have ye never read, 'The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge'?"

Mount with upturned eyes said, "Ah, sir, my success has been my ruin: the numbers increase every meeting, and sometimes we have such glorious meetings, in which many who came to scoff remain to pray."

"Where," inquired Thomas, "were the praying ones to-night? I saw not one serious face in that whole meeting. Do the scoffers come at one time, and the praying ones at another?"

"Pardon me, sir," replied Mount; "I think you are rather severe towards these poor sinners, and a little sarcastic towards myself."

"No, Mr. Mount," remarked Thomas; "I'm a much older man than you, and have been a little longer in harness. Believe me, sir, other motives led me to speak to you in the way I have done. I did not take this long journey in the cold night, either to be severe towards the sinner or sarcastic towards the saint. I came, sir, to cheer you, to mingle sympathy with you. Above all, sir, every movement in the kingdom of Christ, however young, however small, possesses a heart interest for me. The bricks and dust of the humblest school or chapel in Christendom are dear to me, for they belong to my Lord and Master, whose I am and whom I serve."

Mount, in a tremulous voice, said, "I feel truly sorry I have misunderstood you; and now accept of my gratitude for your sympathy, and allow me to add, that any suggestion you in your superior judgment may think proper to make,

or from your larger experience believe would enable me to advance the cause in any way, will always have my best attention."

"As to my judgment," retorted Thomas, "it is not a bit superior to that of most men. My experience in the work of the vineyard is only a little longer than that of your own, and a little more varied than that of many. Before leaving you, permit me to give you a bit of advice, and remember, in the spirit of love I do it. Pull off the silken mitten, and put on the iron glove, and with it grip impudence whenever and wherever you see it. In God's name, and for God's sake, secure ORDER. The gentle strains of the Gospel are never heard in the roar of the blast. Before Elijah's ear could catch the still small voice, the wind, the fire, and the earthquake had to be quelled; even so must it be here. God works no miracles now-a-days. Every faculty of your nature must be used in the workas well as gentleness. It is an instrument, in its own place, as useful as your prayers, hymns, and sermons. this work we must be men-men of God. The Master included among His instruments-and as such they were used by His own hand—the hammer, the rod, and the furnace. Remember with what dreadful effect on one occasion He used the whip; yet 'God is Love.' The disciple is not above his Lord. Look up, sir, to Him, and in all your work acknowledge Him, and in Him you will always find a Model to imitate, a Friend to advise, and a God to help.

"One word more, and I'm done. Form your little ones into a school; that's their church. Do not allow them often to mix with the men and women; they'll taint them. Take them by themselves; you must feed the lambs beside the still waters. A man whose ruling passion is love to

Jesus, and, second to that, love for perishing souls, and who, in winning souls to Jesus, can mingle firmness with gentleness, yet depending entirely on the power of Jesus for success, from the conviction that he himself is nothing, and therefore can do nothing, but at the same time so exerts himself as if on his efforts alone all depended; he it is who will stand in the gate, without shame, his arms full of sheaves at the close of the day. And now, sir, despise not the words of an old man, but lay them up in your heart; their weight will not break your back, but some day they may serve you as a feather to guide your shafts among the enemies of the King. Good night, sir; and may the God of Assemblies ever be in this place."

Seizing the writer by the arm, he said, "Now, boy, lead the way into the night." After getting clear of the school, and on finding himself once more in the open country, his spirit returned to its communing with God and with its own thoughts. This time the thoughts of his heart were of a more joyous description. From the few fragments the writer could pick up they were full of praise, and had they been expressed they would have taken the form of a song.

The writer said to him, "I think, father, you had a message to these people from God to-night."

"Yes," replied the old man; "my soul doth magnify the Lord. I have seen the work at its commencement; I shall not see it closed; but of a truth God is in it. Only one regret remains on my spirit concerning the whole movement. Mount is in the wrong place; his trumpet does not give, to my ear at least, a certain sound; I feel in my soul he is not what he seems."

On the writer expressing his surprise, the old man continued—"I feel none; I know the ring of the sound metal; but about him there is not much that is sound. Yet my

spirit rejoices, for I believe, although every worker in God's cause were to turn traitor, His glory will remain untarnished, and Christ shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. When Mount shall have fully developed himself I shall be in my grave; but the work in Middle Lane shall advance. When Mount shall have gone back whence he came, still the work will advance, and souls, bright in the blood of Jesus, shall be gathered in this desolate place. I shall say no more; but mark Thomas's words—Mount is not what he seems."

After receiving the old man's blessing, I left him on his own doorstep, much refreshed in spirit by his walk and work.

Ever since Thomas's memorable visit to Middle Lane the recollection of his address, "Water ahead!" lingers among the people, and is likely to take a place among its traditions. To that visit of the old man many trace their first impressions of Divine truth. During the succeeding winter he went but little abroad, and more than at any former period suffered from the infirmities of age. But the salvation of the people of Little K—— occupied many of his thoughts, and at stated times each day he remembered their case at a throne of grace; and even now the supplications of that man of God are breaking in blessings over their souls, their fields, and their homes.

Dear reader, how true is it that holiness of heart, begotten by the Spirit of God, and cherished by a constant walking with Jesus, is omnipotent for good! It is the only known force on earth capable of rousing into life EVERY faculty of the human breast, and fanning into an undying flame *ALL the emotions of the soul of man. What will love—love to Jesus, raised by the Spirit into a ruling passion—not

accomplish? Do you know its power? do you walk abroad under its spell? He that works among men under its energy, he that gazes on a dying world through its tears and smiles, dare not rest and cannot slumber while there is a soul to be saved. He that works by faith springing out of such love to Jesus, works till it is eventide, and quits the field bending under the fruits of his labours, his mouth filled with laughter and song. They that work for God upheld by other influences are thus addressed by the Lord of the Harvest: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

The writer cannot soon forget the scene it was his privilege to witness at the old man's house when he reported to him the first case of real conversion at the rooms in Middle He had been poorly for some time, and, except to his bedroom, had seldom removed from the fireside. When the writer called he was seated in an easy chair, and wore a loose dressing-gown; beside him stood a small table, on which lay his big Bible, and his favourite volume. "The Saint's Everlasting Rest," across which lay his large silver spectacles. On lifting up his face it looked somewhat weary, but, as usual, full of happiness; and on being informed that a well-attested case of conversion had occurred in Middle Lane, he gazed wistfully in the writer's face. and. as was his custom when excited, he seized his stick and struck it sharply on the floor, at the same moment saying, "Boy, repeat that again, that I may step along your report word by word."

On the writer doing so Thomas rose and walked across the room to a window from which he could see Little K——, and exclaimed, "Father, the boy reports one: bless Thee for that one! But, Father, is it only to be one? Was it not for many we wrestled? Has the blood only availed for one? But, Jesus my Lord, pardon the haste of Thine old servant; jewel Thy crown as Thou wilt, when Thou wilt, and with as many as Thou wilt: modes, numbers, times, seasons, are all in Thy hands. Speedily, O Lord, let Thy blood avail for more than one. Speedily, O God, undo the windows of heaven, and let the fountains of Thy love be stirred, and the Spirit's influences in drenching showers flood the dwellings and hearts of Little K——, for Thine own name's sake. Amen, and amen."

Returning to his easy chair, he patted the writer on the back, his aged face relaxing into a heavenly smile, and playfully said, "My son, this day's news has made me feel quite gay; nay-shall I say it?-I feel as frisky as a boy when he breaks his money-box on a Christmas Day, with full permission to disburse its contents as he may. Yes, my son, such news would make me young twenty times a day." Every symptom of weakness had for the moment left him, and as the writer was leaving him his last words were, "My son, remember His blood has availed for more than one in Middle Lane: in all your prayers for it, remember THAT; in all your efforts there, remember THAT. Now go on and prosper." Looking up to the frosty sky as he dropped my hand, he said, "Let the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush be with the Israel of these fields. till the voke of Pharaoh be broken from every neck. Amen, and amen."

Reader, what could maintain in that cool period of life—threescore and ten—a human heart so young, so warm, so self-denying, so devoted—save that holiness the Spirit gives? What could keep a heart so old—so fiery, so tender, so deeply concerned for sinners who never once felt concern

for themselves—save love—love to Jesus, exalted to a ruling passion? Oh, may that patriarch's faith, tenderness, holiness—broad, ever-expanding, all-grasping love to Christ and the souls of men—be ours through life and at its close! Let us, in matters of our own souls, and in those of the souls of others, take encouragement and desire strength from broad views of the availing power of the blood of Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

"But quenched to-night that ardour seems,
And pale his cheek, and sunk his brow;—
Never before, but in her dreams,
Had she beheld him pale as now."

A FEW months after the scene above described another of a very different kind passed before the writer, in the same place. One Sunday evening, as he approached the village, he was not a little struck at the entire absence of the "roughs" from the outskirts; even the Common was quite deserted, and everything living had by some means drifted to the other side of Little K——. On advancing into the village a confused hum of human voices in the distance fell on the ear, which, as the writer reached the top of Middle Lane, rose into the swell of a wild and animated conversation, maintained by hundreds of angry disputants. Through the trees groups of excited people were visible, in different parts of a large field owned by the landlord of the Red Lion. The name of Jim was the prevailing noun in every sentence, the chief word on every lip. The day, considering the season of the year, had been remarkably fine; consequently the Red Lion had been uncommonly busy, and

much business done: blood had been freely drawn from the person of a navvy, who had come hither as one of the crowd of pleasure-seekers. Except one, this was Jim's last fight.

As a storm stirs up the deep, and reveals to the light its mire and dirt, so to the spectator did this melancholy event reveal the sweltering corruption of Little K----. navvy was a man of immense size, standing upwards of six feet high, clad in a short, coarse, flannel jacket; corded trousers, yellow as saffron from the soil amongst which he had last been working; a dog-skin vest, and a striped shirt. Round his neck he wore a Turkey red neckerchief, fastened by a copper ring; the peak of his cap resting on one ear, over which, in a genuine "Jack Shepherd" curl, strayed a lock of his curly hair; his mouth and chin buried in a full, undressed, flowing beard; and his feet shod with huge hobnailed boots, shining with oil, unlaced, and their tags lying over the instep like a couple of unruly tongues. Compared with others, for strength a Goliath, and for stature among the people a Saul. He was a man of sour temper and fierce disposition, well trained in the use of his fists, with a strong tendency to use them on the most trivial occasions.

Our friend of the spade, having drunk deeply, became oblivious of little matters—such trifles, for instance, as paying for what he had had. As the afternoon wore away, he prepared for quitting the grounds without settling his bill. It therefore fell to the lot of old Peter to remind him of this omission, and he did so in the politest style of his profession. Calculation never being at any time a favourite study with the navvy, on the present occasion it appeared more repulsive than ever; so he flatly refused even to look at the question; he would only wink and stare at Peter.

Again the old man pressed the question, as time was flying, and again the navvy's knowledge of figures was at fault; but on all such occasions he had a handy way of escaping from his difficulties, so in a moment the old man was laid on the grass covered with blood. Stripped and glowing with rage, like a second Hercules he stood over the prostrate body of the old man, waiting for his rising. At last, believing he was dead, some of the spectators lifted him from the ground, and carried him to the tavern. Execrations of every description were heaped upon the navvy, and cries of "Shame! shame!" rose on every side. Many inquiries were made for Jim and his brother; on the mention of whose names the navvy once more flung himself into a fighting attitude, and vowed to keep the ground against "all comers."

Jim but an hour before had gone home drunk, and was fast asleep in his garret at Bramble Cottage. Bob was last seen rowing a pleasure party down the river; and the old man's wife and daughter, from some unknown cause, were Spang, the faithful ally of the family, by some means or other found his way to Jim in his garret, and brought him to the spot; and in a few moments he stood foot to foot with his antagonist, the brutal navvy. A fearful conflict ensued; each sought the other's life; and, but for the interposition of Providence, one or both must have died on the field. Just as the fight had reached its height. Jim's mother and sister burst into the ring, and seized Jim, shouting, as they did so, "Father's dead! father's dead!" and by sheer force dragged him across the field to close his eyes. They were followed by a crowd, one of which was the navvy, who, bleeding and sore, nevertheless found strength enough to taunt Jim as a coward for permitting himself to be led away by the women.

So galling at last was this running fire of abuse to Jim, that he broke away from the hands of his mother and sister, and once more stood before the navvy, but not to fight—simply to say, "Mate, don't fly your pigeons so high; should their wings get clipped, they'll have a mighty hard fall. If the old 'un die, the mill will be finished by another; if he live, for flinging your hat over my old 'un's gray hairs, I'll finish it here, and to-morrow." Flinging down his hat, the navvy took it up, saying as he did so, "By to-morrow—this very night—I'll be out of the county; so just settle now."

"Ah, be it so; you're not to slip out of it that way. I'll meet you here to-morrow morning. If you don't come up to the scratch, I'll have it out of ye, though I should follow ye over the three kingdoms, old fellow. Good night." Turning round, he entered the Red Lion between his mother and sister.

Such was the storm that had just burst over the fields of Little K---- shortly before the writer entered it that evening.

The following morning saw Jim, with blackened and bruised face, reach the appointed spot once more to meet his foe. The navvy had really left the county, for after the lapse of an hour past the appointed time he did not appear. Jim stepped out from the crowd, and looked in all directions, but seeing nothing of the navvy, he coolly wished all his friends "Good morning;" and after muttering a few wrathful words, he returned to Bramble Cottage. The only friend of Jim's absent on the occasion was Spang. Why he was absent, and how Jim fulfilled his vow, will appear in the sequel.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I cannot sit;—I needs must go:
The spell is on my spirit now.
I go to dread,—I go to woe!
O who so weak as thou.
Strong man! His hoofs upon the door-stone see,
The shadow stands! His eyes are on thee, Lee."

For a few weeks old Peter's life trembled in the balance; and during that period Jim sullenly pursued his calling at the Red Lion, and quietly bore all the gibes of his companions for allowing the navvy to escape so easily the sore punishment they believed he could have given him, and which in their judgment he so righteously deserved. To all these he made but one reply—"Fish don't so easily slip out of Jim's net, without having the colour of their gills looked at."

After a few months had elapsed Peter slowly recovered, and now might be seen creeping about the lanes in the sun, leaning on his stick. At last, being pronounced convalescent, he again entered on his work amid the outdoor revels at the Lion. The whole family, Jim excepted, had forgotten the fray that so nearly cost the old man his life; but in the memory of Jim, like the plague-spot in the brow of the leper, it festered, and at last took possession of his whole inner man; and now he believed the hour for revenge had struck. With such force did this feeling work within him, that at last it overcame every consideration of prudence or danger, and before it anything like restraint "became

as flax burnt with fire, and his bonds loosed from off his hands." A decent pretext for so leaving the service of the Lion as to throw his friends off their guard, and conceal from all the reason for his absence from the district till his infernal purpose was executed, was all he now required. He resolved to start, under cover of a quarrel with Hollis the landlord, on pretence of seeking employment elsewhere,—provided he could find, among his friends, one in whom he could really confide, who could keep him fully informed of all that transpired at home, and, should a pressure make it necessary, one who would not refuse to lend help in working out his foul purpose.

The last evening but two before leaving Little K-, he sent for Spang to Bramble Cottage, and with very great caution made a few inquiries concerning some of the village blacklegs. When Billy reached the cottage, Jim was sitting at one of the windows, enveloped in a cloud of tobaccosmoke, and almost half naked. After saluting Spang in the usual style, he informed him he merely wanted to make a few inquiries about some of his friends, as most likely he might find some of them a berth in a day or two. The worthies of the back slums accordingly were made to pass in review before Jim and Spang. Five candidates were named, and Spang was appealed to for his opinion on each, which he freely expressed in the following style:-The first mentioned, according to his slang name, was dismissed as having "no stand-up in him." A second had "lost his lip-lock," and was therefore disqualified. The third had "plenty of do in him, but kept it always at the boilingpoint, least thing made it run over-never was known to use the damper;" so he was pronounced unfit for the place. A fourth was just the man, but had a "leetle too much of the parliamentary about him when on the rails," and so was

not to be thought of on the present occasion." A fifth and last was named, who, next to Spang, stood highest in Jim's estimation; but his "name was up, the 'cute 'uns knew his figure—two pots and a snapper in 'em would turn him inside out," so in the present emergency would be dangerous rather than serviceable. At last, turning to Spang, Jim said, "You have not chalked up your own name, old fellow; don't you think of soon going into business on your own account? I've a good thing by the hand; make a good start—what do you say to it?" Looking at him rather knowingly, he inquired all about it, and said he might if he knew what it was. "Would vou like to know?—then meet me at Blunk's Wart to-morrow night at half-past eleven by the ticker." This Spang agreed to do, and left Bramble Cottage pondering on all that had passed between them.

The place of meeting lay down the river a considerable distance below the Red Lion. To this spot he was to come at the hour of midnight, bringing with him a dark lantern. the slide of which he was to raise three times, with an interval between, to announce his presence, and on no account to quit the spot till a similar reply was made to him by Jim. As the clock struck ten, Billy sauntered towards the Red Lion with a view to gather some particulars of Jim: on entering the bar, he was surprised, and not a little alarmed, to find that his friend had had a furious quarrel with Hollis the landlord, and had quitted his service; when last seen, he "had his steam up, and was putting to sea with three sheets in the wind," and swearing he "would get into collar elsewhere." Rather an ominous beginning to the night's business, thought Billy, as he stripped these announcements of their slang, revealing to his mind as they did three things—that Jim was in a towering passion, was the worse for liquor, and resolved to quit Little K--; and with a man in that condition he had an appointment, at a lonely spot down the river, at the dead of night! Poor Billy's courage was tried to the uttermost, but being genuine it refused to yield, and he tried to brace it for the occasion by reasoning thus with himself:— He began by recounting out of how many conflicts that same courage had dragged his sorely-punished frame: should Jim on the present occasion be rather free of hand, he consoled himself with the thought, he was small of stature, and might therefore miss a few strokes, and what did reach him he had plenty of bone to receive; should he only throw him into the river, that was nothing-it would not be the first time by six he had been there before, and he could swim like a duck,—so that accomplishment, with an hour or two before the miller's kiln, would soon square matters on that score; and when he remembered how many times Jim had been kind to him in the past, he resolved to be true to him Courage so genuine, resolution so noble, deserved a better leader than Jim, and a nobler cause for its develop-After taking some refreshment he saw by the clock, if he intended to keep his appointment, he must start; so, whispering to himself a snatch from one of his favourite ballads---

"I have, I know, too many faults, But I'll be true to thee,"

he started to his feet and left the house. After walking a considerable distance, and observing all around him quiet, he slipped under an old boat which lay near the bank, keel uppermost: there he prepared for the journey. He first lit his lantern, wiped the glasses, and tried the slides: finding them all right, he wrapped it up in an old coat-sleeve, and

buried it in one of his pockets. Next, his toilette claimed his attention: this matter at all times required but little of Billy's care. On the present occasion, however, it must not be neglected, because of the necessity for concealment and despatch: the first, he thought, would be effectually secured by pulling a greasy cap completely over his round, bulletlike head, and buttoning his fragment of a coat up to the chin: despatch, he thought, would best be promoted by retying his boots, and rolling his trousers up to his kneesa precaution very essential to progress and comfort, when the reader remembers his march lay along the bank of the river, in some parts of which the ooze was more than a foot The last thing attended to was one of pure luxury—the "loading and firing of Jaco," as Billy would express it; which in plain English means, filling and lighting his pipe.

Thus equipped, he crawled from under the boat, and climbing, wading, scrambling, tumbling, and smoking along, he at last reached the appointed spot, and mounted a large stone, pulled forth his lantern and made the concerted signal. How thoroughly like a child of the night was that strange, weird-looking youth, as he stood on that stone smoking his pipe, swinging his lantern round his head. making its rays fall on the dark water, the dark beach, and the stunted trees on the opposite side; his trousers only reaching his knees, his cap covering his ears, and his fragmentary coat-tails flapping in the breeze as it swept past him! Several times he sent a signal-flash across the water. but only to be swallowed up by the darkness; for as yet no countersign had been made in reply, and half an hour had come and gone. He began to feel sad as he strode up and down, or seated himself on the stone, and took counsel from his own thoughts. At such moments Billy became the

victim of a constitutional weakness of his—a tendency in his mind towards the horrible. For years he had been in the habit of reading the accounts of every execution that took place in London; his library consisted of such solemn publications only. He could give "a full and particular account" of almost every execution that had taken place before the Old Bailey during the last quarter of a century, with notes and annotations purely his own, by way of improving the text. His memory, too, clung with terrible tenacity to the malefactor's "dying words," the very last that fell from his lips having the preference. On one occasion, being nearly drowned, just as life was going, these doleful lines were recalled to memory, and more than once during that night they had threatened to rise again to the surface:—

"All you that in the condemned hold do lie,
Prepare you, for to-morrow you shall die;
Watch all, and pray, the hour is drawing near
That you before the Almighty must appear.
Examine well yourselves, in time repent,
That you may not t' eternal flames be sent.
And when St. Sepulchre's bell to-morrow tolls,
The Lord above have mercy on your souls!

Past twelve o'clock!"

He had found these lugubrious words in the account of an execution of the seventeenth century which he had read. On all occasions of apprehension they were sure to rise to his mind, bringing in their train a host of appalling visions and gallows sayings. These dreary lines had been busy with poor Billy's heart during the half-hour he had been waiting for Jim, and now he made sure something was about to happen to him: it might be his last night, he thought—yet something held him to the spot, and would not let him

leave. As the night began to turn, the moon. Billy said. "began springing her lantern, too, every now and then, through a slit in the clouds, and at times making things shockingly clear." At last, mounting above the masses of drifting cloud, she began to diffuse on all around "a secondhand daylight," as Spang called it—who, poor fellow, between his fear of discovery and the train of ghastly images suggested to his mind by the Newgate stanza, felt anything but happy. Screwed up to a last effort, he once more climbed the stone and swung his lantern round his head, wildly accompanying the act by a ringing whistle on his fingers, which sounded in the stillness of the night like a "dying scream." This done, he looked in every direction in expectation of Jim's reply. A pause, three flashes of yellow light, and a piercing whistle, rose from a lonely spot down the river in reply to Spang; and, almost immediately after, he could hear, so still was all around, the splashing of the oar; and through the pale moonlight, almost as soon, he could discern the huge bust of the Crusher, as it nodded and pulled at the oar. A few more strokes, and the boat ploughed the gravel at Billy's feet.

"Halloa, old 'un, the top of the morning to your honour:
—waited long?" with a grin, inquired Jim.

"I've stood or walked, between the tail of the night and the top of the morning, a full hour by every ticker in Little K——; that's all I knows," replied Billy, rather cautiously.

"O ho, my pet, sits the wind that way? Why, you're like old Hollis's wine—all the better for being kept,—I can see: have gathered a good crust in the time. I wonder if a good shaking could break it—eh?" growled Jim, and leaped among the shingle near the spot where Billy stood, causing the little stones to fly in his face, which brought

into the poor boy's memory its whole collection of gallows sayings, and made him wonder whether a thrashing or a ducking were to come first, or both at once. His courage, however, remained with him, and enabled him to gather up his little frame into the attitude of resignation, and wait the issue. Jim for a moment caused the full blaze of his lantern to fall on Billy, during which he surveyed his faithful friend in disguise, and with a horse-laugh said, "Now, Master Swallowtail, find a perch there in the stern, and let's have no more of your chatter."

At the word of command, with both eyes open, after the style of a Scotch terrier, Billy, coat and all, was crouching in a corner of the boat, which, through the leverage of Jim's shoulder, was instantly in deep water, himself bent at the oar, and its head turned to Blunk's Wart. As the boat dropped down the river, the moon shone full on the boy's face, enabling the Crusher to discover in it signs of anxiety; on observing which he asked him, somewhat surprised, "What's up? You look as straight as a cow in a thunderstorm. Something has flurried your milk, I know; out with it, old 'un. Have any on 'em been blowing your fur the wrong way—eh?"

To which Billy replied, in rather disconsolate tones, "Why, Jim, it's no good a feller's doing the amiable to you; he can't please you nohow. When I said I had waited for an hour, which could be sworn to by every ticker in Little K——, I didn't mean nothin' but that I was up to the scratch—that was all."

"Oh, that was all," remarked Jim, "was it? Keep your powder dry, then; my match ain't lit yet. I wasn't rusty—only thought you had a leetle too much wind in your sails, and might drift too far to leeward for an old 'un to do much with ye: that was all, Spang."

This conversation was somewhat abruptly closed by the rasping of the boat's keel against the gravel of Blunk's Wart. In an instant they were both on the bank, and made the boat fast to the stump of an old tree, and then retired to a gravel-pit in the middle of the little island. Blunk's Wart was only an island during high tides, and at such times was a favourite resort of the visitors and boating parties of the Red Lion. A few old stunted trees, some dwarf bushes, a covering of wiry grass, a high-walled gravel-pit, and a fine view of the open country, constituted all its charms.

As soon as they got settled in the pit, a flash from Jim's lantern showed, carefully stowed away in a corner, a couple of long pipes, a stone bottle of beer, and a bundle containing a loaf of bread, a piece of boiled pork, and some tobacco. As Jim brought the provisions to the spot where Spang was lying, he said, "Now, then, game 'un, put something in your bread-basket, and then we'll proceed to business. A feller always does his work with pluck when the safe's full—eh, Spang?" Hereupon both drew their clasp knives, and in a very short time made a hearty meal, washed down by frequent applications to the bottle; after which they lit their pipes, and, according to Jim, "proceeded to business."

Reader, before closing this chapter, let me ask you once more to look upon these two depraved men,—few pictures more suggestive of thought, solemn thought, ever met your eye. Both are met to arrange a plot—a very dark plot—which in days to come will cause hot tears to furrow their cheeks. As you look at Jim, do so with pity, not with scorn. There he lies; his coarsely-clad frame exaggerated in its bulk as it rolls about in the shadow of the wall, and his fierce, whiskered countenance looking more forbidding

than ever to-night, in the sickly light of the lantern; yet smiles of grace, like the sparkling wrinkles in a summer lake, will cover it—yes, cover that face—with the beauty of holiness. And poor Spang, before you despise him, look at him again; there he sits, with his bullet head resting on his hands, his sharp eve watching and reading the Crusher's face, his swallow-tailed coat still buttoned to the chin, and his knee-breeches revealing his mud-dyed legs; his conscience the while tortured by some malefactor's last, very last word, or by some gibbet ditty. There also is the river with solemn murmur rolling past, the Wart, and the fields -all bathed in the soft moonlight. Can you, do you turn from the scene in despair? Just before you leave it, give Do you not hear the voice of Jesus rising from the grass, saving, "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him"?

Once a peasant was prevented consigning to a cold outhouse a belated beggar, who really was his sovereign in disguise, by discovering a belt studded with jewels peering from under his rags. So, if we would watch, many of those souls we consign in our haste to the outhouse of perdition, we should find, although in rags, are really of the house and lineage of David, as their conversion afterwards proves. Let us not fail to pray and watch for the first glimpse of the jewelled belt. Let us cease judging, and at once aim at excellence in working. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that." "The Lord knoweth them that are His;" and every soul written in the Book of Life, however far from home, will reach it at last. Let us arise and deal with the souls imme-

diately committed to our care, asking no questions, passing no judgment.

"Let us, then, be up and doing, With a heart for any fate; Still achieving, still pursuing, Learn to labour and to wait."

CHAPTER IX.

"Ah, fool, let but a passion rise in war, Your mighty doors of Gaza, posts and bar, 'Twill wrench away. The Delilah of old, He snapped the bands of tow, and freed his frame, And forth he walked."

HAVING stretched themselves full length after their hurried meal, resting their elbows on the ground, each, supporting his head on his open palm, thoughtfully smoked his pipe; between them stood the lantern, from which issued a stream of yellow light that simply revealed the under lip and chin of the smokers.

"How goes the tide at the Lion to-night, d'ye know?" inquired Jim, with the intention of starting the business which had brought them together.

"The tide," replied Billy, "ran very high in that quarter to-night, right up to the gunwale; everything all round a-rocking as if it were on a swing, and a sou'-wester right in your teeth; old Hollis a-raving, and forgetting to take the ready for what he sells, and to give back the change to his customers. Everything's walloping about in a spring-tide at the Lion to-night; everything's floating, nothin' standing: such a game!"

"What's up, young 'un—is it full moon at the Lion to-night, that the tide runs so high?" asked Jim.

Here Billy, regarding Jim's countenance rather watchfully, stopped in the middle of his answer, allowing part of it to melt away into a loud neighing laugh, in order to gain time and ascertain which way the wind lay. A look across the bar of yellow light between them informed Billy that things required delicate handling, if peace was to prevail. Recovering from his fit of laughter, he finished his sentence as follows:—

"In course, Jim, you's been down the water all day at the Wart, and knows nothin'—in course not—about what's in the wind's eye, or how high the tide is at the Lion." Here again the rest of his sentence died away in a storm of laughter.

Jim, somewhat taken aback at Spang's power of evasion, became not a little irritated at the jocose manner in which he commented on his question; and, his blood yet hot through the quarrel at the Lion, he was in a mood for anything rather than fun: so, stretching his powerful arm towards Spang, he seized him by the collar, and drew him close up to his face with a jerk. "Now, Spang, spit it all out—all out, I say, or I'll squeeze it out on ye: Jim ain't in a humour for a game at bowls to-night."

Made somewhat sullen by Jim's special attention, and having plenty of mettle in his composition, Spang turned round and tartly replied, "Old Hollis says you raised the row, because he asked ye for the quid [a sovereign] scored against ye for the last six weeks' bill; and that if it ain't a' been for old Peter, he would a' made ye turn your bows up the water in a twink, and cast anchor near a certain house in the City not twenty miles from London Bridge."

Jim, springing to his feet, and throwing his wide-awake on the ground, fiercely inquired of Billy, "Did he not say I rubbed out my score, and threw the quid in his face? did he, Spang, eh?"

"He didn't need to tell it—the mark on his cheek told it for him," responded Billy. "And his monkey was so up,

had you not paid it, you would have been swinging at anchor, as he said, near London Bridge,—that's all I knows, Jim."

"And old Peter saved ME, Billy," shrieked Jim. "The old man saved him: I know, if the old 'un hadn't a' come in between us, I'd a' made his timbers creak, and sent him into dock with his sails in ribbons, I know. The old 'un save Jim—eh?" Here he whistled, gave a leap, and then lay down beside the bar of yellow light once more.

After some considerable pause Jim again turned to Billý and asked, "Did you hear the gov'nor say I had slipped out of collar?"

Here Spang laughed and coolly said, "Jim, let that craft stick in the mud—it ain't worth bursting your braces pullin' on it out. In course, your slippin' out o' collar was all the go at the Lion among the Pets?"

"Now, Spang, would ye like another squeeze?—the last 'un done good. Turn your bows into mid-stream, and scud as the wind blows, or we'll have broken water in a trice," growled Jim.

After a moment's reflection, Billy informed him that Hollis, with a wink and a whisper, said to the "Pets," "he believed you wouldn't be long out of collar; before the wind chopped round, he thought ye might slip your head into one from which ye couldn't slip out in a twinkling: and the 'Pets' set up a screamer all round, and poked each other in the timbers."

"What was there to curl their nose in that?" inquired Jim, impatiently.

"Why, in course now, Jim, you ain't so young as all that comes to, I knows," responded Spang. "Why, mun, they all think you're a-going into business on the 'Low Toby' [highway robbery]; in course they do."

Spang afterwards told the writer that here followed a scene he never shall forget, and never wished to forget. Jim suddenly started to his feet, gave a wild laugh, and slowly retreating beyond the shadow of the wall, repeating as he retired the fatal words "Low Toby," he at last stood motionless in the pale moonlight, still grinding between his teeth the words "Low Toby." Dropping his knife, as it fell he murmured, "I do not want thee—that belongs to Low Toby." Staring wildly round him for a moment, he smote his open palms together with a noise which echoed all round, uttering at the same moment an awful imprecation. with which he coupled the names of Hollis and the "Pets." Spang could only catch the close of the sentence, which was, "Yes; were they all here, I'd give them every Toby out but the Low Toby." Here he made the words "Low Toby" into a kind of defiant howl, which with piercing clearness repeated itself along the banks, and on the water, in a manner so unearthly as to make Billy tremble, and his blood run cold. Uttering the words "Never, never, never," he slowly approached the wall, and flung himself on the ground with a groan. After lying a moment still, he slowly repeated the names "Hollis and the Pets:" and. uttering another howl, he extended his arms and clenched his fists, at the same time making his toes strike the ground with such force as to cause the small flints to fly like hail in all directions.

Billy made sure he had gone mad. Jim again became still, but kept muttering to himself certain words; at last the words faltered on his tongue, and were succeeded by a heavy sigh. After again for some time remaining completely still, he raised himself to a half-sitting posture, gave a wild laugh, and said quite aloud, "Yes, yes, Hollis is right: had he and the Pets been here, I should have got

into another collar before the wind chopped round; but I should have walked over their necks to it—that I know, and would have done so laughing: but Old Peter's white head has saved the lot on them." Coolly adjusting his wide-awake, he stepped out and picked up his knife, returned, and again lay down beside the bar of yellow light.

As if nothing unusual had happened, he asked Spang to fill his pipe; and while Billy was thus engaged, Jim in a very easy manner asked him "How many of the Pets were there?"

Spang responded, "Oh, only Lanky, Parliamentary, and Boiler;" and in a manner as easy Billy finished by saying, "There now, let that craft, Jim, lie in the mud. I told ye, ye'd burst your braces a-pullin' on it out: and arter it is out, ye can't float the length o' a boom before ye're up to the knees in water."

Jim, in a musing mood, slowly repeated, "Lanky, Parliamentary, and Boiler,—a nice string on 'em! How they'd a' grinned if I could 'a got one of my braces round their necks to-night! Oh, well, another day—another day; I'll only book 'em now." Suddenly recollecting himself, he gave Spang a smack on the back, saying, "Well said, bright 'un! they ain't worth any chap's old braces. But another day—ay, another day; we'll turn to a new wrinkle now. The next move on the board, Spang, if ye please."

Billy, somewhat at a loss how to interpret the last remark, remained quiet.

"Well, Spang," resumed Jim, "I intend hooking it somewhere: I think I'll have a spell at the barrow and spade in some corner, and give Little K—— the benefit o' my back for a few months. What say ye to that, old feller?"

"Nothin', Jim, nothin'," replied Spang, rather sadly; for

Jim was Billy's idol, and in his rough way Jim had been very kind to him.

"Nothin' to say to a feller jest agoing on his travels?" remarked Jim, somewhat astonished, for, with all his roughness, he counted on a LITTLE affection among his friends. "Your moorings are easily cut, little 'un: this is the last cut, surely. Why, I see you can come to a feller's hand as cool as an anchor that's a been lying among frozen shingle, when the wind doesn't blow your way."

Poor Billy, very much hurt at his affection for the Crusher being called in question, remarked, "What can a feller say when he has nothin' to say?—how can he tell his mate where to put his trampers down, when he hasn't a glim to see where his own are—eh, Jim? When you have hooked it, Spang's bread-basket will often be empty, I knows; and Lanky and the Pets will have the rub of me—that's all I knows, Jim. And when a mill's a-comin' off, Billy won't have e'er a one to tell him how to do the scientific or nothin': he has little to grin for in your goin'—that I knows anyhow, Jim."

"Now then, Billy, that I see you're all right about the centre-bit" (the heart), remarked Jim, "I may at once tell you, I'll not sleep another night in Little K—— for months—that's nailed. I should have liked to have tightened old Hollis's hoops a leetle, and rubbed down Lanky, Parliamentary, and Boiler, so as to have made 'em a bit respectable before goin'; but then the old 'uns at Bramble Cottage would have had to rub out the score; so we'll just let the chalks remain on the board till I return from my country trip: then we'll clear up, Billy my boy."

"There again," said Billy; "you won't let that craft stick in the mud: I shouldn't skin my hands if I was goin' to have a spell at the barrow, Jim. Let it rot, man: let

the one lick the t'other into the civil before you see 'em again; leave old Hollis's hoops alone, or he might get you into a spell at the crank not twenty miles from London Bridge, you knows. It would be like sweet milk to him. Then away goes the grub o' the old 'uns, Jim; and that ain't to be sneezed at, I knows."

"Agreed, Spang!" shouted Jim. "We'll let that old craft rot in the mud, and we'll square its timbers after my trip's over. I've just one wrinkle more, and I'm done: then I'll hook it."

"What's that?" inquired Spang.

"The one I asked ye to meet me at the Wart for, Spang," replied Jim. "You know when I was knocking about I kept things a little square for the old 'uns; any how, I kept the four pins of Bramble Cottage always on the perpendiclar, whoever played the bowls; but when Jim's abroad this won't be so easy, ye see, and I want you to do the civil for them as often as ye can; understand, Spang, eh?"

"All right, Jim; anything in my small way I can do for them I will; I knows that any how," said Spang.

"Take care of old Peter's trotters," continued Jim; "when things are brisk at the Lion, do a leetle of the running for him; put Mag and the old 'uns up to a move or two when the tide's right in their teeth, so that they may always get to wharf before the storm breaks; and when ye can, and as often as ye can, make it always easy for the three on 'em to cast anchor in a quiet cove."

"All right," replied Spang; "not a move on the board but I knows in a twink, Jim; leave me to do the amiable for the three on 'em."

"Now then, Billy, allow me to throw the big 'un (his brother Bob) into the bargain," said Jim; "has not a one idear in his knowledge box; can only eat pork, kick up a

row, and pull a boat; can bark mighty loud, but not a tooth in his head as can draw blood. He's always sure to knock his head agen the wall; Lanky and the Pets are sure to drop on to him, and keep him in shed; now when there's anything on the wing, jest tip him the wink, and throw up a straw, that he may see which way the wind lies; once got his weather eye open, then he and his big carcase must keep their own against all comers—understand me, Spang, eh?"

At this last request Billy shrugged up his shoulders, saying rather quaintly as he did it, "Yes, but, Jim, he's so thick in the nut, you can't get an idear into it unless it's as sharp as a boat-hook; and then his tar is so blazing hot it runs over at the least poke of the fire, and your bunch o' fives is burnt before you have time to wink."

"Never mind that, Spang," said Jim; "throw the straw up, I tell ye, and we're quits; that's all, old 'un."

At this moment Jim's instructions to Billy were cut short by a rumbling noise heard in the distance, which arose from a cart approaching the Wart in expectation of the tide's being sufficiently low to allow the loading of some gravel. In a moment Spang shouted, "Put out your glim, Jim, and let's take the water." Quick as thought, Spang was gathered up in the stern as before, and Jim at the oar. After having cleared the island, Jim turned the boat's head towards the bank opposite Little K-, on reaching which he sprang on shore. Billy was about to do the same, when Jim cried, "No, Spang, no; you're to take the boat home. I've spit it all out now; mind the old 'uns and Mag. Spang-let that sink into your centre-bit like a stone in mud, and let it lie there till I take it out. Mind and keep Bob's weather eye open, not forgetting the straw: and now three cheers for the spade and barrow." After grasping

Billy's hand he took off his hat, and gave three fierce cheers, and disappeared over the bank.

Billy stood in blank astonishment, as if a ghost had stared him in the face, and exclaimed, "He must have a tile loose; he's clean cranky, I knows:" and jumping into the boat he reached the other side as the village clock struck four, made the boat fast to her moorings, and crept to his lodgings.

While reading this chapter, one thing must have struck the reader—how profoundly Jim kept secret the object of his journey, in his least guarded moments, even from Spang. Also, what will a love of revenge not prompt a man to forego and to dare. The quarrel with Hollis was designed. and so designed as to result in the loss of his situation, a situation quite to his taste, and in which he had rejoiced for years. The same passion made him willing also to part from his family, which in his rough way no one after the scene in the pit, and his instructions to Spang, can deay he sincerely loved; yes, for the gratification of this one lust. Like a man possessed with a legion of devils, he resigns himself to all the miseries of a lonely and a vagabond life, the end of which he could not foretell, and with a probable termination of which his own soul shuddered even to dream.

The shrewd Spang was perfectly at sea, he had scarcely a "glim" to throw light in the way of Jim's feet. One slender thread he had, and that was all; for immediately after the fight with the navvy Jim whispered to Spang, "To follow him to his lodgings, and fish out the road he intends to take." Spang did so, and after following him a considerable way, he found he lodged at a small beershop on the road side, where, on the navvy's arrival after the fight, he was received among his companions under the appella-

tion of "Sammy." After lingering in the neighbourhood for some time, while in the act of getting a light to his pipe, Spang ascertained that "Sammy" and his gang were bound for a railway cutting in the North of England. This information Spang carried home to Jim; and with this simple fact as a starting-point, that morning Spang guessed Jim's object, and had seen him set out on his errand of blood. "The way of transgressors is hard," but "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "Long hath the night of sorrow reigned, but the dawn will bring us light."

CHAPTER X.

"Now from the sheath arise,
Delight of warrior's eyes.
Come out, come out, my sword;
I will fulfil my word.
Hurrah!"

In silence, and in presence of one witness only, had Jim departed from Little K——, with these words—"North of England" and "Dutch Sammy," picked up for him by a wayward youth, as his only guide: but, as the floating weed points the mariner to a land before unknown, or as the straggling footstep guides the bloodhound to its victim, so "North of England" and "Dutch Sammy" led Jim to the unsuspecting navvy. As time rolled on, and month followed month, inquiries innumerable were made for Jim at the Red Lion. To these queries, answers as various as they were numerous were returned:—at one time he was drowned; at another, he was far away at sea in one of Her Majesty's ships; or, by way of change, he had taken the shilling, and as a soldier was doing duty in India.

At length his exploits and his name assumed the legendary form, and served to beguile the time of many a reveller at the Lion; and, as it always follows in such cases, his crimes and his faults were forgotten and forgiven in admiration of the romance of his deeds: even old Hollis and the Pets ceased to protest—nay, at last became loudest in praising his valour. Spang, faithful to his trust, continued

to do the "civil" and the "amiable" to the whole family, Bob not excepted, who, now that Jim was gone, became very susceptible of hints, especially where his flesh was concerned; and his faithful monitor found little difficulty in securing an entrance for them into his thick head, although the "idears" that conveyed these hints were not always as pointed as a boat-hook.

Glad should we now be if here we could drop the curtain, and behind its friendly shade for ever hide the grim details of the mode in which Jim performed his awful vow: as often as we can we will do so, and in doing it feel but too happy. Jim was not drowned—nor far away at sea, nor under the burning sun of India: he was in Englandthe North of England—on the trail of "Dutch Sammy." For weeks and weeks he toiled and worked from bridge to bridge, line to line, and cutting to cutting, almost over the whole of the North; and although as persevering and selfdenying as an Indian savage on the spoor of some rival clan, yet in his journey for many days everything seemed real but its object. At last, one day, a new idea was suggested to him, while listening to the conversation of two navvies working next him. One was inquiring of his companion if he ever found any difficulty in finding out old hands when they changed lines; to which the other replied, "If none of my mates knows, I axes at the keeper of the tommy-shop; HE always knows something on them. because before they goes, ye see, they have to clear their scores in one way or t'other, and before parting generally they leaves behind 'em where they are to hang out their flag next."

The "tommy-shop" referred to is the name given to those provision-stores which some railway contractors establish, or allow to be established, at their works, especially when these lie at a considerable distance from any village; and from the nature of the relation between the storekeeper and the workmen he is not unfrequently pretty well acquainted with the movements of his customers, and consequently is often unconsciously the means of bringing about meetings between friends and foes.

The fact supplied by this transient conversation at last afforded Jim the only information necessary to complete his awful task. By carefully disguised inquiries, made at various times and in different ways of the keeper of the "tommyshop," he was enabled to trace "Dutch Sammy" to the very cutting in which he was at work. Having made sure that thirty miles to the north of the place where he was now at work he was certain of meeting Sammy, he resolved on setting out immediately after finishing the toil of the week, and, if it were possible, to find employment in the very cutting where his victim laboured. After receiving his wages for the week, he quitted the place in silence, and once more took the road.

It was now the latter end of July, and in that part of England the standing crops were rapidly maturing for the sickle. In the daytime it was sultry; towards evening a refreshing coolness prevailed; at night a gentle breeze played upon the cheek from among the trees, and kept up a constant murmur among the purple heath which grew upon the hill side. On the Friday night of the last week of the month he started on his journey, expecting by easy stages to reach its close on Sunday, and, if possible, find work by the side of "Sammy" on the following Monday, leaving the performance of his vow as to time and place to circumstances. After settling with his landlady for his week's lodgings, and stowing his wardrobe into an orange-coloured handkerchief, which he fastened to the end of a

short stick supported on his shoulder, he lit his pipe and started about the middle of the night.

Crossing a few fields, and diverging from the main road about a mile, he reached a low range of hills among which wound a narrow path. In some parts, for a mile or two, this path would lie along the brow of the hills, with a vast moorland in front; at other parts, it would twist along the bottom of the valley, having as companion a brawling By day, in the blaze of noon, the heath looked as stream. if tinged with blood, and in the moonlight as if charred and scorched by fire. Sometimes the monotony of the wilderness was varied by a small lake deeply fringed with flags and rushes, affording sanctuary to water-fowl; and in its little sheet of water the sun mirrored himself by day, and the moonlit clouds seemed to float about like masses of carded wool by night. Now and then, too, the belated traveller was apt to become confused for a moment amid such scenery, for often here and there Will-o'-the-wisp swung his lantern among the long grass of some marsh. Such was the path and such the landscape along which Jim toiled, his infernal errand his only motive.

After walking some three hours, he felt weary and hungry, and resolved to rest and take some refreshment. For this purpose he crept under a clump of bushes on the hill side. The silence of the scene was all but complete, the distant bleating of the sheep on the hills at intervals, the low moan of the breeze among the heath and long grass, being the only interruptions. Before him spread the moor, across which at the moment from behind the shoulder of a hill the moon scattered her beams in snowy patches, lending a silvery brilliance to a small lake at the foot of the hill, around which the flags and rushes bobbed and nodded like so many sprites in the pale moonlight.

Having made a hearty meal, he drew very freely on the contents of a small spirit-flask that he carried in his pocket. In a little while he felt stupid, feverish, and thirsty. To allay his thirst he descended the hill, and approached the small lake on the edge of the moor, and immediately under the spot on which he had been lying. Just as he reached the margin his foot slipped, and he came down on one knee, making a splashing noise among the reeds, which roused from their slumbers six or eight water-fowls: these, on "whirring" wing, rose one after another right before him into the sky. Fear and trembling seized him; the hair of his flesh, like wires, seemed to stand erect, and streams of cold sweat poured down his face and shoulders: the only words he could utter were, "The devil! the devil! all the angels of the devil!—Jim's a dead man!"

Still in the posture in which he fell, he stared into the sky, fearing, trembling, and sweating. For the first time in his whole life he became conscious of fear—the weight of a feather would have made him sink under the water. "Two or three big thoughts," to use his own words, "rolled through my mind, and they were big 'uns." He felt for the first time what a bubble is life, and remembers repeating to himself these words: "What a go, what a go! snuffed out on a moor!" The thought of separation from all things earthly took him wholly by surprise, and filled him with This reflection was succeeded by another still amazement. more awful: the idea of another world rose painfully up before his mind; his soul, like a frightened bird, fluttered within him in presence of the dreadful thought! He felt as if he stood on a spot separating two worlds, from one of which he felt he was already for ever separated, and seemed only waiting for the arrival of messengers to drag him into the other. "From whence will they come," he instinctively asked,—"heaven or hell?" His conscience distinctly muttered, "Hell!" So dreadful was the sensation of the moment, that his teeth chattered, his frame trembled, his brain reeled, and he fell heavily on the brink of the lake as if dead. Before becoming unconscious, the last sound that fell on his ear was that of his own voice giving utterance to the word "Lost!" and, as his eye was closing, he could distinctly trace the same word on the sky, "in huge notched letters, that appeared to stand in the silver haze of the moonlight like so many stakes in snow."

An hour had nearly passed before he awoke to conscious-What roused him he could never discover. sitting up he shivered from cold; his lips were parched with thirst, and his heart felt in his breast as if scorched by On opening his eyes he started to his feet, and gazed wildly on every side to ascertain where he really was. first thing that settled the geography of his position to his mind was the sight of the bushes, and his bundle in the orange handkerchief lying beneath them. He again returned to the bushes on the hill, but so confused in mind that, in order to reassure himself, he opened the bundle and examined its contents. Now certain that all was right as to the locality, he felt greatly puzzled to account for what had transpired at the lake. He was ashamed of being frightened; so much so, that to this hour he believes, had a fellow-creature been the cause of it, he would have flung himself into the lake and disappeared from among men. It never once occurred to him to look for the cause of all in his spirit-flask; nevertheless there it was assuredly. the bushes and the contents of the handkerchief settled at once the identity of the locality and his person, so the return with increased force of his hatred to "Dutch Sammy," among the thoughts of his troubled heart, at once informed him the same fierce spirit with which he had started on his journey still dwelt in his breast, and unaltered, to use one of his own phrases, "still kept its shoulder at the wheel." Vigour returned to his limbs, and strength to his muscles, as the circulation of his blood increased; self-possession was restored to his mind, and his faculties, one after the other, resumed their accustomed work on the return of his ruling passion to supremacy in his soul.

One who has passed a restless night, and whose bedroom has been, from troubled dreams, a chamber of horrors, feels relieved and comforted by the return of day; so did Jim as he left his resting-place on the hill side, and beheld the dawn in gray streaks creep over the face of the sky. The morning twilight revealed flocks of sheep quietly grazing all around, and the silence of the moor was disturbed only by their bleating; everything seemed to say to him he was still on earth and among the children of men. That such was a fact filled him with joy, and he felt as mile after mile stretched between him and the lake (as he expressed it) "he was escaping from old Scratch and his little 'uns."

Saturday evening saw his journey all but accomplished. He took rest and refreshment at a small public-house which stood at the junction of the hill path with that of the high road. Some of the navvies on the line in one of the cuttings of which he was informed Sammy was at work, formed part of the company in the room where Jim was sitting. Once or twice Sammy's name was mentioned in conversation, on hearing which, Jim said, "the heat came and went in his face as if some one opened and shut a furnace door in front of him."

In the course of the night he learned the name of the very cutting in which he was at work—it was called the "Black Gully," and was distant some six miles from the house in which he was sitting; he also discovered that Sammy was one of the night gang, which would be turned out to work at twelve to-morrow night. This was enough; scarcely could he refrain giving audible expression to his feelings, as he recalled his father's injuries, and brooded over the insults heaped upon himself at the door of the Red Lion, and the many jokes the navvy's escape had given rise to at his expense among the "Pets." The blood went bounding through his heart with such power, as he thought on those things, as almost to make him sick, and he could not help murmuring, "And now may the best man win." After some considerable time he stretched himself full length along the wooden settle on which he had been sitting. and by degrees his feelings becoming somewhat quiet he fell asleep. Scarcely had the Sabbath morning risen on the distant hills before Jim, with his bundle and stick, was on the road leading to the Black Gully. On reaching the spot at a very early hour-few were on foot-he ventured hastily to survey the Gully, and then retired to a neighbouring wood, where he resolved to spend the day till the hour of twelve should summon the night gang to their

The holy day wore away, and passed; Jim employed himself in sauntering through the neighbouring woods, and moodily thinking on the future. The hour of midnight at last arrived; already the noise of footsteps was heard along the narrow tracks that wound through the woods; the night gang had turned out for work, and the men were threading their way to the Gully. As the mingled noise of voices, jingling tea cans, and rattling spades, fell on his ear, "he felt a flush of heat steal over his face; it came and it went as if he had been bobbing his head near a plate of red-hot iron; and the blood went poppling about his heart

as the water did about an old post to which he used to moor his boat." An hour had passed away, now not a sound was heard in the woods, save the subdued murmur of the leaves overhead, or the sharp ring of the labourer's axe against the rocky surface of the Gully.

The "Black Gully" got its name from its sombre appearance, chiefly caused by overhanging wood. It was a deep ravine running almost through the entire length of a forest; its sides were rugged and savage, covered with a dense growth of brushwood, with here and there huge masses of blue rock cropping out, and at intervals an old giant tree, black and dying, overhung the pass; the mould having fallen away from part of its root, suggested to the mind some forlorn creature in the very act of suicide. bottom was rugged in the extreme, being rent and tunnelled in all directions by the turbulent waters of times and seasons, long, long passed away; and in all the confusion the primeval torrents had left them, were scattered about masses of water-worn rocks. It was a battle-field on which the strife had been terrible; winds, waters, and rocks had been the contending forces, and all around were the signs and memorials of a fearful conflict. The turning of a portion of this dreary scene to railway purposes gave employment to a host of labourers divided into night and day gangs. In the former of these was "Dutch Sammy."

Leaving his hiding-place, Jim stole to the spot he had selected on the Sunday morning. A narrow path leading to it had, for some purpose, been cut through the wood, and terminated in a shelving rock from which a spectator could with ease survey all that passed below. Here, stretching himself full length, and resting his chin on his hands, he gazed on the works and the workmen as they toiled underneath. A garish sight it must have been. At

different points of the scene glowing fires in iron baskets were suspended from the boughs of trees; others, surrounded with bricks, sent forth columns of smoke from different angles of the Gully. As far as the eye could reach, streaming from among the bushes, were twinkling rays of bloodred light along the line of work, and innumerable torches flung a glare on an interminable network of plank-ways. their flames the while waving and swinging around them in the night air, like so many plumes of fire. Rising from below also, and floating above the whole scene, was a confusion of sounds, forming over all as it were a vocal atmosphere, composed of noise from the booming of the engines, the clattering of the axe and spade, the rumbling of the trucks, and the wheeling of the barrows; here and there, at intervals, leaping above the confusion, were the gruff commands of the ganger, the crisp Irish joke, and snatches of some wild melody.

But one figure remained unmoved and collected in that moving scene, yet hearing and eyeing everything: that was The strength, the build, the skill of the workmen had for him at that moment no charms: their faces, their faces only, were all he desired to see. Long and wearily did he survey the receding and advancing navvies along the various plank-ways, but in none did he discover the "face of the foe." More than once during the suspense did he audibly ask himself this question: "What! after all, is it a sell?" While almost in the very act of rising from the ground and quitting the spot in despair and disappointment, his eye was arrested by one figure on which a broad glare of torchlight fell. It was that of a man of uncommon stature; even in the distance Jim felt somewhat of a former acquaintance with him. His commanding height seemed familiar, his very boots looked like old friends; but scarcely

could he believe his eyes, as the "navvy" came toiling along the plank, directly under the cliff on which he was lying, when he discovered the old oilskin cap, with the peak resting on one ear, just as he saw it that day when its huge owner stood triumphant over the prostrate form of old Peter; and when, as from the bowels of the earth, he heard the name "Dutch Sammy" rise upon his ear, his feelings became uncontrollable: in a burst of fiendish joy, and at the utmost pitch of his voice, he exclaimed, "He's bagged! he's bagged!" So distinctly did that wild cry rise on the night air, the labourers below seemed paralysed by it, and for a moment the work stood still. Fearing discovery, he hastily retraced his steps through the wood, and before daybreak reached the public-house where he rested the night before.

CHAPTER XI.

"I see before me the gladiator lie;
He leans upon his hand,—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low,
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won."

SHORTLY after the scene described in the last chapter. Jim sallied forth in quest of work at the Gully. In a short interview with the night "ganger," to his extreme delight he was engaged as one of the night hands, and in that very part of the works, too, in which Sammy was employed. At the appointed hour he was on the spot, and had his work and place assigned him. In the execution of his task, a few days sufficed to give satisfaction, and as a workman to place him among the first; but never once had he lost sight of that object dearer to his heart than the praises of his "ganger," or the noisy plaudits of his fellow-workmen,the revenge on the person of Sammy of his father's wrongs. This formed the meat and drink of his turbulent soul; to make sure of his object, he resolved to play the observer for a season, leaving the hour of vengeance to be determined by circumstances.

In a very short time, from sheer strength he was able to

perform the work of almost any two men, and so in the eyes of his employers became invaluable; from feats of skill as a wrestler, he was adored in the field by his companions; on account of his jokes, frolics, and songs, he was considered king of the tap-room: in a word, Jim became the most noted, most popular, and most influential man in the night gang.

For a short time all went on quietly: in all their meetings—at work in the cutting, at sport in the fields, or debauches in the tavern—no two men knew less, apparently, of each other than Jim and Sammy. Occasionally, Jim, by allusions to the Red Lion, tried to refresh his memory, but in vain: either the whole scene had vanished with the return of sobriety the day after it had happened, or, being simply an affair with an old man, its insignificance, compared with other brawls in Sammy's gay career, made it dwindle into a hazy speck incapable of recognition. One thing at least was certain: from whatever source it sprang, no man showed less disposition to praise Jim for his feats of strength, on the works or in the fields, and on no occasion did Sammy evince a shadow of desire for close intimacy with him.

By-and-by, some alterations on a distant part of the line made it necessary that a number of the men at work in the Gully should be sent thither as soon as the progress of the work could make it possible. The "ganger" informed the men that he would be able in a fortnight to spare the necessary number, and told off the names of those it was his intention to send. Among the names thus mentioned was that of Sammy, but not that of Jim, who, in a moment, saw that within the fortnight his long-cherished vow must be performed, otherwise the bird would again escape the snare of the fowler. This announcement called into full

play once more all Jim's lust for vengeance. As fragments of mercury dropped on an uneven surface run together and form one pool, so every feeling in his heart seemed to blend with this one, and form in his bosom one pool of seething hatred; as mist spreads over the landscape, and by degrees shrouds from view its homesteads, mountains, and streams, so every redeeming feature in his character was veiled in this fire-mist of his distempered heart. To his fellowworkmen he seemed as one possessed: hushed now were his jokes and songs, and, instead of being guided by reason, he frequently appeared to be led by a wild animal energy only; it was visible even in the wheeling of his barrow, the handling of his spade, and his wrestling in the field. The men were utterly at a loss to account for the change: if they spoke to him, he scarcely replied; and when he did so, it was in words that burned: if they jeered him, he heeded them not; or if they tried to allure him back to his former self, he quietly rose and walked off. During the intervals of labour he held no communion with his companions, but sat apart, a sullen, wild, and sorely-vexed man. At last, as if by one consent, he was left alone by all as one beside himself.

As the fortnight wore away, he became more and more disturbed in his mind. While he slept he was tormented by horrible dreams; and in his waking hours he was continually haunted by the suspicion his victim would escape him. On account of the troubled state of his mind, and from an increasing dislike to society, he frequently left his lodgings long before the hour for work, or any of the men had turned out for the night, and might be seen, hands in pocket, his greasy wide-awake almost covering his eyes, wandering alone among the lights and smoke of the Gully like a spectre.

About three days before the breaking-up of the nightgang, he had reached the works some considerable time before the hour of labour. He had the Gully nearly all to himself, the only other persons present being the three or four whose duty it was to feed the fires, trim the lamps, and light the torches. As he sauntered along smoking his dirty black pipe, his blouse tied round his neck, his tea-can jingling at his waist-belt, his spade under his arm, and his whole soul, as usual, wrapped up in its hellish abstraction, his meditations were somewhat disturbed by a loud snoring behind a pile of bricks near one of the fires. He turned aside for a moment to discover the sleeper. The glare of the fire revealed the bulky frame and brutish features of Sammy! The sweat in little bubbles rose to Jim's brow: his whole soul was in a blaze, or, to use his own metaphor, "ran about within him like a child on fire." Something like a demon stirred within him, and cried, "Now or never, Jim!-strike, strike, and be at rest!" He looked all round, then up to the sky, and then on Sammy. He was in an agony of passion. It was such a moment as that which passes across the path of the assassin before his victim dies-such as that which witnesses reason and conscience reel in the soul of the suicide before he leaps from the bridge into the river: Springing back, he found relief to his agonized spirit by smiting his breast and exclaiming, "Back, devil-back, devil! Jim never kills HIS rats in a cage, but likes 'em to die game in a fair field and no favour." Having passed through the dreadful temptation, and turned aside the fiendish suggestion of murder, his feelings became somewhat calmer and a little more under control; he quietly sat down opposite Sammy, the fire burning and smoking between them. After gazing on him for some time, he started one of his wild songs, beating

time with his spade, watching the while through the dancing smoke the power of his music on the sleeper. In a very short time Sammy ceased to snore, began to stretch himself and wriggle about among the loose bricks; at last he awoke in a very bad humour, and, starting to his feet, demanded of the intruder his name and errand, finishing the interrogation with a flourish of oaths. To these questions Jim replied—

"My name is 'your Master;' and to settle a little bill with you, that's my errand, old fellow."

"My master!" in a scream that rang through the Gully like that of the wild curlew among the hills when her nest is disturbed, retorted Sammy; and, rubbing his eyes, he stepped out from the fire and smoke to make sure to whom he was speaking.

"Jim, you're a-speaking in your sleep, surely," continued Sammy, very earnestly, and at a loss how to interpret Jim's words or account for his disturbing his slumbers. "You're downright dreaming, Jim, when you said you was Sammy's master; for he knocks under to none on 'em, ye see, and he settles all his bills as he goes—yes, pays as he goes; so out agen, Master Jim, as I reckon: there must be a crack somewhere in your knowledge-box, old 'un. I done nothin' neither to make you come down on me like a pile-driver—neither will I stand it from ye, though you be cock o' the walk an' king o' the tap. Do ye mean it? Open the sluice and let it all out, an' we can drink, we'll tell ye. If you're only a-moonraking, a feller isn't always up to a lark with his nightcap on; so ye may pass on to the next squad."

"Sammy," retorted Jim, "do you ever mind flying your pigeons rather high over the grey hairs of an old 'un, at the Red Lion in Little K——, when he asked you for the

'ready' for what ye had drunk, and instead of a tanner you tipped him a crowner from your bunch of fives—eh? Do ye mind my tapping YOUR claret rather freely for what ye drew from the old 'un, and I had the stopper put on by the old girl when she hauled me off to see the old boy snuffing out? And do ye mind taking up my cap, agreeing to settle the little bill the first time we met—eh? Here we are, old fellow, jowl by jowl; and as ye make a noise of paying as you goes, down with the ready, and I'll hand ye your change."

At this part of the scene they were gradually surrounded by the men who now began to assemble for work, and who were naturally attracted to the spot by the noise. Jim and Sammy, as if quite unconscious of the presence of their companions, continued their altercation.

Sammy, while Jim addressed him as above, stood resting one foot on the blade of his spade and his elbow on the handle, and looked somewhat confused. He appeared to be trying to remember the scene Jim had just described. Suddenly it seemed to flash across his mind, and with a laugh he replied—

"All right, Jim: now that I think of it, I DID bring an old 'un to his senses at the Lion, for drawing it rather bitter, and tryin' to do me out of a tanner; and when two wenches, one on them with fingers like the teeth of a rake, smugged you away to save your bacon."

Here a loud laugh at Jim's expense rose from the crowd all round.

"Do ye remember," said Jim, nothing daunted by the laugh of the bystanders, "when I threw down my tile, saying, 'I'll meet ye to-morrow morning; and if ye ain't up to the scratch, I'll have it out o' ye, though I should follow ye through the three kingdoms'? I have followed ye, and caught ye on the hop."

Jim tossed his hat into the air, shouting, as he did it, "Take it up, mate, and may the best man win."

Sammy, with apparent good nature, stooped and picked up Jim's hat, saying, as he did so, "Come, my little darling; Sammy never refuses a good thing; and may the best man win." Amid the cheers of the workmen the hat was returned to Jim; after which it was resolved to fight it out the next Sunday morning at dawn. The men quietly distributed themselves over the Gully, and work was resumed as if nothing had happened.

During the intervals of rest the workmen might be seen in little companies, discussing the quarrel of the night, and pronouncing opinions on the respective merits of the combatants, and the probable result of the meeting. also, that curse of English society, with all its debasing and brutalising features, was rife among the workmen; generally ending in favour of Jim, who, from the quarrel, appeared in their eyes in a character at once romantic and novel, reminding them of the knights in the ballads they were accustomed to sing, and the tales they were in the habit of reading. His name was mentioned with a kind of veneration, and in their eves he was more than ever the hero of the gang, the idol of the hour. Sammy's popularity underwent a corresponding depression. This did not arise from any doubt of his courage, of which he had abundance. as his share in their field sports and tavern brawls could well testify. Neither did it arise from his want of skill in the use of his hands, for as a pugilist he was notorious on almost every line in the North of England. It arose from his appearing so long not to know Jim, yet having met him in a fight; also every man in the gang despised his conduct towards the old man, so much his inferior by reason of age and physical debility. The verdict of the whole gang

was against him—"It was a low touch, and far below a man of his science;" so it was expressed among them. Yet, from the known force of character possessed by Jim and Sammy—from their being equally matched in strength and pugilistic skill,—a kind of wild interest gathered round the whole affair, and news of the coming struggle spread like wildfire among the navvies of the whole district. The precise place of meeting was not fixed till the afternoon of Saturday. During the intervening three days Jim mingled little with the workmen at their leisure hours, and on quitting work he regularly disappeared. He abstained from drinking, and resisted every enticement to it on the part of the men. At last the appointed day arrived.

Long before the dawn of the day of rest streams of unwashed, unshaved men, poured from all quarters through the woods, and from the surrounding hills, towards that part of the moor that stretched on the north side of the Gully. Its aspect was bleak and savage in the extreme. Its heathy surface here and there swelled into low ridges of hills, behind which in the dim distance could be descried a range of mountains, whose peaks, bleak and naked, rose up against the sky. The wildness of the scene harmonized well with the dark errand which brought these turbulent sons of labour together. Little did they think that the unslumbering eye of the God of peace was upon them; or that his recording angel hovered above the purple heath, making a memorandum of the words and deeds in that scene of blood and shame. Far less did they think that Jim, the Crusher, would, ere that year had expired, be before the cross of Christ, with scorching tears and breaking heart, suing for the pardon of that sad morning's work. Truly has the Lord said, "My ways are not your ways, nor my thoughts your thoughts."

The light of the Sabbath broke over the moor covered with crowds of drinking, swearing men. Suddenly a tremendous cheer rose over the scene, and died away in echoes among the hills, making the birds in confusion spring from the bushes, and every man to his feet. and Sammy, accompanied by their friends, had arrived: and that deafening shout was their welcome. magic, the straggling groups of labourers were drawn together into a waving mass of roistering men around the two combatants. Order was restored, and every arrangement for the conflict completed. Amidst death-like silence Jim and Sammy appeared in the centre, stripped to the skin, the muscles clustering here and there on their naked busts like ropes. Thus they sternly faced each other in The first blow was struck by Sammy, which solemn silence. resounded from Jim's broad chest with a dull sound, and nearly raised him from his feet. For an hour, with varying success, did they punish each other, amid the coarse applause of that crowd of workmen. At last, Jim, whose passions seemed to gather increased vigour and heat from every blow he received, with a fearful yell hurled himself at Sammy (now almost blind), exclaiming, "I'll have the old man's blood out of ve or I'll die," at the same moment planting a blow on his victim's forehead, which stretched him on the heath to all appearance a corpse. Cries of "He's dead, he's dead! take him away, take him away," rose from every man in the They were accordingly separated-Jim comparatively little injured, except on one cheek, which the sledge-like fist of Sammy had laid open almost to the bone. But as for poor Sammy, his face and shoulders were one mass of gaping wounds and bruises.

All being over, Jim secretly withdrew; and that very night he left the Gully for ever, believing he had kept his

vow, and done the deed for the performance of which he had received his very existence. Such were Jim's private thoughts.

During the day the whole neighbourhood was kept in a ferment by strolling parties of drunken men, who had travelled far to witness the fight. The authorities from the nearest town at last appeared on the spot; order was restored, and the crowds dispersed. Poor Sammy's lodgings were besieged with inquirers, for it had been reported as simply certain that in a few hours death would ensue. This, however, was not the case. For some weeks he lay in a very precarious state, the injuries he had received being of the most appalling description. For many months he could do little more than crawl about the doors. again did he become the man he had been. From that Sabbath morning to this good hour he carries about in his flesh one sad memento of the lot of a pothouse brawler. Sammy, poor Sammy, now knows by bitter experience that the way of the transgressor is hard.

CHAPTER XII.

"Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine, than the physician.—
God, God, forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her:—So good night:
I think, but dare not speak."

THE deed of blood is over, the rash yow has been kept, and Jim, in his own estimation, has played the part of a man. The bloody transaction formed a nine days' wonder among the frequenters of almost every tavern and railway cutting in the north of England. To escape the law, however, and its executive, it became necessary for Jim to assume another name, and for months play at the game of hideand-seek. The ultimate recovery of his victim, and the lapse of time, at last allowed Jim's foul deed to take its place as an ordinary brawl on the sheet of crime, and gradually it faded from the memory of most of the witnesses, except when in their cups, and then it was only referred to as a "glorious mill." Even Sammy at last used to speak of it as the "hottest pie he ever put his finger into," and he always admitted that he had "fair play, full swing, and no favour." Finally it dwindled into a shadowy tradition among railway labourers, and ultimately died out.

When it became safe for Jim to be less secretive in his communications and freer in his movements, he was troubled with strong desires to return home. Bramble Cottage and its memories began to revive within him. In his dreams. waking and sleeping, he could hear more frequently than formerly the "row and roar" of the old Red Lion. Hollis. its keeper, and his Pets, passed in review occasionally before Their charging him when he left with starting on the "low Toby" rose often in his mind as he thought of home; and the faithfulness of Billy Spang used often to throw him into a kind of melting mood. Reflections such as these so often visited his silent hours that at length he resolved to go home, and began to prepare accordingly. His first step was to put himself in communication with Spang, and through him ascertain how matters stood there, and if his "bit of business" at the Gully was at all known; if so, whether it would be politic in him at that time to make his appearance. In a letter to his friends at home he revealed his intention, and asked them to seek out Spang, and by a certain day and to a certain place, a few miles from Little K-, send him to meet him.

Reader, who is he that lies there, drawn up in a heap at the root of that tree, reminding the spectator of the hairy man of the woods, of nursery fame? He is snoring, starting, and grunting in his sleep, as if in pain and grief; there is long grass, too, peering between the fingers of his clenched fist, apparently torn from the bank in a moment of agony; dew gems stand on the stripes of his Guernsey, his clothes torn and soiled, bespeaking many a rough journey and long hours of weary toil; the worn iron heels and toe-pieces, the broken eyelet holes of his boots,

glittering in the morning light, telling of hard labour and flinty roads; his shaggy locks and bristling beard, as if dried in an oven, suggestive of physical force and the will to use it in him who owns them. Who is this, reader? It is Jim, the idol of the Gully, the Crusher of Middle Lane, the conqueror of Sammy. It is Jim, on his way home from a life of brawl, strife, and violence in the North, to a life of brawl, strife, and violence in the South. But the days of such a life to him are numbered; shortly, like the smitten eagle, he will retire with broken wing to the clefts of the rock—the Rock of Ages cleft for him! O Spirit of Grace! how incomprehensible art Thou in all Thy ways, and past finding out! What power but Thine could transform this mass of corruption into a new creature, bearing the image of God?

Such was the condition of Jim as he was found by Spang at the root of a tree in a small strip of forest near the high road leading to Little K——. After awaking from his troubled slumbers, and as he sat listlessly chewing a stem of grass, he observed Spang approaching the spot waving his scrap of a cap, and performing various antics by way of a hearty welcome and recognition.

There was little alteration in Spang as to appearance, manner, or dress; he was still the same odd, mischievous, sharp boy he had left him at Blunk's Wart on the night he started on his vengeful errand. After shaking hands with him, Jim addressed him thus—

"Well, my little terrier, how's the wind blowing at Little K——? How are the old 'uns? Are Hollis and the Pets hanging together yet? Is my little brother Bob as ready with his flippers, and does he keep his mouth as open—eh?"

To these interrogations for a moment Spang made no

reply, but continued gazing at Jim with great attention. At last, having finished his survey, he exclaimed, "My eye, Jim, how they've marked your figure-head since I saw ye; they must deal in hardware up north—eh?"

Spang here referred to one or two scars Jim had gotten in his conflict with Sammy; the wounds were whole, but the marks remained, and more than one of them he will carry with him to his grave.

To these remarks of Spang Jim merely replied, "Yes, old fellow, they settle all their bills in hard cash up north. I settled mine up there with Sammy, you know (here pointing to his face), and that's the receipt."

"Ah, then, Jim," retorted Spang, "I'd rather be the chap that puts 'em sums down in the book than the fellow that gets the receipts, that's all I knows."

"Well, well," continued Jim, "let that pass; he's got all his cash, and I've got the receipt; that's the head and tail of it, Spang. What about the old 'uns?"

"All jolly! The old girl and Maggie up to the scratch, as usual. Bob's as big as a hayrick, and as quiet now as a dog that's twice drowned."

"Bob quiet!" exclaimed Jim. "What's tied his clapper?"

"You see," said Spang, "he's had a good many bills to pay down on the nail in the same kind o' cash as Sammy deals in, since you went away; and, Jim, he has such a rum lot o' receipts to show—my eye! he has a lot, he carries 'em all over him! and as his wollop's nearly empty, I suppose that makes him sing small—that's what I think, Jim."

"But, Spang," inquired Jim, "does he never have a go in now?"

"Only once a month, or thereabouts," answered Spang,

"to keep his hand in, and to keep the rust off his nails—that's all."

"And how does the old boy rub along since I left? Toll loll, I suppose, eh? Kind to the old chap, most on them, eh? What! Billy, do they draw it pretty mild for old Peter?" asked Jim.

To which Billy responded, "I should think so; why, Jim, ever since Sammy tapped the old 'un's claret he has prospered every day. It's all daylight with old Peter. Hollis always strokes him with the hair now; and Bob or some of the Pets are at his elbow, to do any bit of fancy work that may turn up."

"Do Hollis and the Pets still think I'm roughing it somewhere on the Low Toby, Spang?" inquired Jim; and here the old fury he exhibited in the gravel-pit returned to his countenance as he waited Spang's reply.

"Jim, put the damper on," answered Spang; "you're a regular swell with them now. They think you're on board the navy, or drowned, or in the Indies, starring it among the darkies with a gold belt round your scraper, velvet on your collar, and a yard of steel hanging at your side."

"Ah, that's better, Spang, than cutting throats and prigging purses on the king's high road," remarked Jim to Billy. "That'll do, my son. Had they come any more of the Low Toby cut with me, they should all have had a little of what Sammy has had, and he knows my Toby is high enough. But now to business, my son. What news from the north, eh? Anything afloat to make a feller trim to the lark and sing, 'Croppy, lie down'?"

"Not a smell, Jim," replied Billy; "it's all as quiet as a prayer-meeting; they're clean off the trail; you may flash it into Little K—— when you like."

"Then," said Jim, "Spang, you hook it now, and tip

the wink to the gov'nor, and say Jim'll take his old crib upstairs at the Bramble by twelve o' the ticker, and that 'mum's' the password for the next month."

After each partaking of some refreshment, and making every necessary arrangement for meeting at Bramble Cottage by midnight, Billy and Jim separated.

CHAPTER XIII.

"'Angel of wrath! Why linger in mid-air,
While the devoted city's cry
Louder and louder swells? and canst thou spare
Thy full-charged vial standing by?'
Thus, with stern voice, unsparing justice pleads:
He hears her not—with softened gaze
His eye is following where sweet Mercy leads,
And till she give the sign, his fury stays."

JIM, according to his arrangement with Spang, reached Bramble Cottage at the appointed hour. After many peculiar expressions of endearment, he once more became a member of the household. For several weeks he went very little abroad, and when he did so it was generally at night. In this way by degrees he again insinuated himself into the chosen circles of the Red Lion, and gradually resumed the duties on the water he had relinquished when he started in pursuit of Sammy. As gradually did Bob become imperious and quarrelsome as his brother mingled in society, and often did his imprudence endanger Jim's safety, who still was haunted with the apprehension of trouble on account of the affair at the Gully.

The following scene closed Jim's career as an enemy of the Cross of Christ, as the bully of the Red Lion, as the persecutor of the missionary, ragged-school teachers, and open-air preachers of Middle Lane. The shades of evening are falling fast, and all around is quiet; the stars are peering through the heavens, they seem scattered over their expanse like sheep in a pasture, and the moon, like a shepherdess, wanders among the clouds, tending her flock with golden fleece. The labourer's toils are over for the day; the roads leading to the village are thronged with men, women, and children, loaded with supplies for the coming Sabbath. The only stationary figures in the scene are two men seated on a stile across a path leading to a field some distance from the road. Being excited with drink, they maintain between them an angry conversation; their pipes are going, for a little cloud of smoke loiters round their heads. These men are arranging matters for the Lord's day too; they are Jim and Bob.

"I say, Jim (this is the last time of asking), are you to go in and win for me to-morrow?" asked Bob. "Two or three of your taps on the noddle, one or two of your left-handers, mixed with a brace of your squeezers just before he go to grass, will settle my bit with him; it will also keep the colours of the Red Lion flying, and be a refresher to the memory of the coves that have forgotten you since you trimmed the lamp of the 'navvy boy.'"

"Well, old sneak, you and I must come to an understanding. I see you are still troubled with a white liver, you mooney; why do you push your smeller into other people's saucepans, and then raise a screamer when you find it hot? If you ain't up to the scratch, why don't you keep your clapper quiet, and your scraper out of the ring? Bob, a shut mouth catches no flies; and when the wollop's low, there should be no flashing it. But, old feller, my shutters ain't down yet, nor do I intend to put on the steam for some time. 'These premises to be closed till alterations are completed; then they will be opened with an entirely

new stock.' So says the draper's bill; so says Jim. My last stroke of business was rather on an extensive scale, Bob—rather extensive for my slender capital. I intend coming out with a smaller kind of goods. I don't mean falling into the Peeler's hand like a fly into a sprat's mouth. O dear no, old chap; if you can't carry your sails, don't go to sea; that is, without any blarney, if you're afraid of your bacon, keep on that side of the hedge where there's no dogs."

"O ho! master Jim," retorted Bob, "sits the wind that way? Are you going to turn parson, and take to dealing in Gospel wares, as they say at school-meetings? Is the Crusher going to knock under, then, and cry, as they do up the Lane, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth?' Ha! ha! your last affair has turned your blood into milk—ch? You are coming out in a small trade! Very small—needles, pins, and rattles, Jim; is that to be the cut—ch? Are the little dears from the city to have the choice of everything on your board for one penny—ch? All right, Jim, we'll smash the concern, and cry quits. I'm off to the Lion; I'll lush it till morning, and run halves with the first comer. Hurrah, hurrah, for Bob's big brother!"

His anger beginning to rise, Jim with great bitterness replied, "I say, Bob, have you forgotten what father used to say to you? He used to say you were like one of them there big fish—what's their name? They're all mouth, you know—one half of their length, all jaw; they do all their fighting with their mouth. Sharks, I think, they call 'em. Sailors catch 'em out at the Indies with a piece of beef at the bottom of a barrel. They're so fond of beef, they poke their heads into the cask, and on trying to get them out again are caught by the gills with nails which are stuck all round it. Being in a fix, all they can do is to flounder.

splash, and dash in the water, fix themselves all the more, and when all the pith is gone out o' them they're quietly pulled to shore, and ere they can help themselves are skinned alive; and the best of it all is, during the struggle you never see any part of them but their tail. Father used to say that was you all over; you liked the beef, but you always forgot the nails. Av. and the old feller was right too; you kick up a row, go bang at the beef, and while you're eating it Jim's tearing his hands with the nails to keep you from being skinned alive. Doing it now and then I don't mind; but for you always to be getting the beef, and me always getting the nails, I don't see any fun in that; so next time you have a go at the beef, don't forget the nails. And you say I'm going to turn parson? That's a nasty slur, and you know it: I don't like a bone on them. never did, and never shall. A black coat and a white choker always give me the bile. I'm not going to knock under neither, nor cry, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth!' O no, old boy, every one to his trade. Our family never liked preachers nor preaching for ten generations back; father nor mother never did, nor did their father and mother, I know. There's a crook in all our horns; our family's like the old gipsy's coat—past mending. We ain't made of the stuff they make Christians out of, so don't let your spirits go down; Jim won't be lost among the saints just vet."

"I won't have any more of this, Jim," replied Bob, becoming angry in his turn; "I think ever since you came back you've had a tile loose. I'm off."

Jim here sprang forward, and seizing his brother by the collar, pushed him back against the stile, saying as he did so, "Not so fast, Master Robert; you shall hear it out, and be thankful your name's Bob, or very likely you 'ud

have had more than one tile loose, although you never went from home, and would have found I have no milk where blood should be, and that the iron I used to carry in my sleeves is not yet turned into cotton. I wasn't hanging out the white flag neither, when I spoke to ve about going into a smaller trade for a month or two. You know the Peelers and the people of the North ain't just quiet enough yet about the visit I paid them, so I must sing small. I intend keeping my hand in in a quiet way, so neither you nor any one of the respectables need quake yet. Even now I don't mind murdering a tune in a meeting, reading a salvation tract upside down on the steps of the Lion, or for a variety making a street preacher's chair stand another way than on its feet. But no, Master Jim must mind number one. Jim mustn't use his bunch of fives on your account or his own just vet: Jim must work in company, and for many days must do nothing on his own hook; so to-morrow you'll have beef and nails all to yourself for me. I will not fight." after the last remark, struck his brother twice with great violence, saying, "Take that, and that, and tell me if they're made of softer stuff than when you last tasted them." This done, he coolly left his brother, and made the best of his wav home.

There is not a streak of the coming day visible at the noon of night; yet it is the hour nearest the dawn. In nature everything looks ominous and foreboding immediately before the storm bursts which is to clear the sky. Just after the bugle has sounded, and bidden every sword leap from its scabbard, nothing could be more confusing and appalling than the rush of mutual foes on the field of conflict; yet through that strife and over "garments rolled in blood" often lies the nearest road to freedom. So is it in the history of a soul on the very eve of its passing

from death unto life. Sometimes above such a soul there broods a darkness that might be felt; every element of thought within it seems surcharged with the sulphurous breath of a tempest, immediately before the voice of Mercy stills its rage, and the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness covers the ruins it leaves behind with glory. Almost in the very hour of salvation the mention of the name of Jesus summons the individual thoughts of the heart about to be redeemed to a display of the bitterest enmity, even while over head might be heard the decree that hostilities were ended.

So was it with Jim. The hand that has just struck his brother is never to maim another! His pugnacity is soon to take another turn, and find other foes; with Satan, self, and sin, Jim is soon to enter the lists! Until Death cries "Separate them" will that battle be maintained! to-morrow's sun shall have set, one of these blasphemers that have just left the fence will be surrounded by light from heaven! With breaking heart, streaming eyes, and trembling hands, one of them shall shortly be groping round the cross of Christ, and filling the air with the piercing cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat." Yes, reader, ere to-morrow's sun has sunk in the western sea, the Persecutor, Reviler, and Crusher of Middle Lane, shall have become a little child in Jesus! O how completely veiled from each brother is his immediate future. They have separated never again to meet each other in the same cir-Bob has found his way to the Lion, there to drown his cowardice and his wrath in its fire-waters. has just climbed the garret ladder of Bramble Cottage, his bosom raging like a furnace with anger, he has flung himself down on his bed an unsaved man for-the last time!

CHAPTER XIV.

"When the flood of grief is swelling,
Deep is calling unto deep;
Then the soul, in darkness dwelling,
Sits apart to wail and weep;
Wailing always, weeping weary,
Says, 'It is perpetual sorrow,
To-day, to-morrow, each to-morrow
Rising on the darkness dreary,
Setting on the evening dreary,
Only grief from time shall know.'"

THE Sabbath dawns on both the brothers, and beholds each at his post. During the day they keep apart, not a word The Crusher, unknown to his passes between them. brother, and at much risk to himself, kept sufficiently near to be able to render him help should the expected fight take place. Jim was sullen to all around, and orderly in the extreme. The hour appointed for the fight arrived, but with it came no combatant, and Bob once more was out of danger. Jim, making sure of this, left his little brother to swagger among his friends in a whole skin, while he himself disappeared to join a very select party at the bar of the Lion. He had not been long there when one of the company, a coarse little man, with oily locks, knowing looks, and much consequence, inquired "if any larks were likely to take wing during the evening?" All replied, "there were not any as yet-not even the

feather of one." The same little man with oily locks inquired as to the hour; on receiving information, he exclaimed, "Well, I'll lay a pot with any one on ve I'll disperse the saints up the lane in ten minutes to-night." Before any one closed with the wager, the eyes of the whole company fell on Jim. On observing this, he said, "It's no good looking to me; mum's my password, and invisible the colour of my coat, for this season anyhow, and you know why." After a pause the company turned to the little coarse man, accepted his wager, and shouted with one voice, "Agreed, agreed." They continued drinking for some time, then sallied forth to fling their lark in the air, and enjoy its descent. Jim, cursing those circumstances in his lot that compelled him to be only a sleeping partner in an enterprise so congenial to his tastes, followed afar off, sullen, boozy, and silent. When they reached the lane many had gathered round the preacher, and were sweetly singing that peculiar and beautiful hymn of Hart's:-

Repent, ye sons of men, repent:

Hear the good tidings God has sent,
Of sinners saved, and sins forgiven,
And beggars raised to reign in heaven.
Beggars, beggars, beggars, beggars,
Raised to reign in heaven.

God sent His Son to die for us,
Die to redeem us from the curse:
He took our weakness, bore our load,
And dearly bought us with his blood.

Dearly, dearly, &c.

In guilt's dark dungeon when we lay,
Mercy cried "Spare," and Justice "Slay."
But Jesus answered "Set them free;
And pardon them and punish Me."
Pardon, pardon, &c.

Salvation is of God alone: Life everlasting in His Son: And He that gave His Son to bleed Will freely give us all we need. Freely, freely, &c.

Believe the Gospel, and rejoice: Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice: His goodness praise, his wonders tell, Who ransomed all our souls from hell.

Ransomed, ransomed, &c.

So deeply solemn was the impression made on every mind by the singing of this hymn, that silence reigned on every Jim sat on a stone apart, and watched events; as yet his friends had not sent their lark into the air-they lacked opportunity. The preacher on this occasion was godly Mr. Power himself, accompanied by "Crawler" and a few of the ragged-school teachers. Amongst the crowd the teachers were dispersed, dropping tracts into every hand, and kind words into every ear. Mr. Power read these words as his text, "And him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out" (John vi. 37). Looking round him, the good man thus introduced his subject :-- "Fellowsinners, when living at the seaside we sometimes ramble into the country, and unawares, through some wooded path, reach a hill top, where at our feet, stretched out before us, lies the ocean, its breast rising and falling in the sun; as far as the eye can reach, and in every direction, it can see vessels, laden with riches from all the ends of the earth, speeding to different shores to supply the wants of man. Fellow-sinners, this passage reminds me of such a sight; it suddenly lays open the heart of Jesus, which, like a vast ocean of love, lies stretched and panting before you tonight! His thoughts of mercy towards us, like vessels laden with riches, are crossing it in all directions, seeking a port where they may unburden their wealth." Pausing for a moment, his countenance kindling and sparkling with affection, he looked round on his hearers, who, evidently struck with the simple beauty of the picture he had drawn, stood quiet and motionless around him. After gazing on them for a moment, with increasing pathos he resumed his address:—"Fellow-sinners, mount the highest cliff, and cast your eyes across that sea of Mercy—the heart of Jesus! There are vessels crossing it loaded with gold tried in the fire; they are bearing down on the very shore where our lot is cast! Sinner, dear sinner, poor sinner, dying sinner," turning his eyes in the direction of Jim, he thus finished the sentence, "there is a vessel for you, laden with love, even for you!" Jim hung down his head, silently shook it, and seemed to say—"Impossible."

By one quick eye in the crowd the path of the shaft had been watched. While the sermon was proceeding and the hearers were once more absorbed in it—our larking friends among the rest-a trembling white hand was laid on the Crusher's shoulder, and a silvery voice whispered in his ear, "Brother Jim, I'm come to tell you there's a vessel in our port, JUST COME IN, everything on board is addressed to you, and the vessel's name is 'Whosoever.'" The singular message, the soft hand, and the gentle voice of the messenger, caused him to lift up his eyes. How amazed was poor Jim! He stared as if an angel from heaven stood before him! The messenger was a slender and delicate lady, over whose flowing ringlets and beautiful features five-and-twenty summers had come and gone, and who, ever since the work had commenced in Middle Lane, had devoted to it all the time her easy circumstances could allow, all the energies her fragile form could yield, and all the advantages her gifted mind and fine education could supply. She moved about

in her Master's work among the families of the locality with the decision, enthusiasm, and courage of a devotee. By none could it be more truly affirmed, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The Crusher was crushed. He rose to his feet, gazed at the lady, and sat down again. But again did Miss Emily's words rouse him. Jim." she repeated, "His heart is like the rolling sea, you've heard. Oh, believe me, there's room in it for theeyes, for thee! Just as you are, arise, brother, and dive into it; it's yawning wide to receive thee. My soul waits and trembles till you plunge into its awful depths of love. Dive for your life!" Shaking in every limb, again he rose and looked into that pleading face. It was such a face as Jim had never seen before; its glowing, beseeching eyes, and blushing features melted him! Her words pierced his soul as the lightning's shafts pierce the cloud. He stood dumb before her, not a word would rise to his lips; he only wept. shook his head, and sat down. But Miss Emily felt Jim's hour was come, she knew his soul's fate trembled in the balance, she could not let him go, and once more her hand was on his shoulder, as she exclaimed. "Oh, brother Jim. why pause when the good ship 'Whosoever' is lying in the harbour laden with the very best things in the bosom of God, bearing your very name on each of them?" Once more poor Jim rose to his feet, his eyes streaming with tears, and by an awful effort at last gasped out, "Ah, ma'am, my soul's as black as ink; I fear it would darken the very sea of Christ's love! No, no, no, ma'am! poor Jim must be burned white in hell. What! God! the God of you teachers! the God of the Testament, look at the Crusher of Middle Lane! Never, never; even the very devil seems to be ashamed of him."

Wiping the tears away with his sleeve, he made an

awkward bow to Miss Emily and slunk away. Mourn not, Miss Emily; the work is done. The arrow has drunk blood, the Crusher is saved. Poor Jim, a Power stronger than thine own is upon thee, and now art thou a little child in Jesus!

He did not reach home till midnight; for in sore agony of heart he had lingered among the hedges, lamenting his condition; at one time agonizing in prayer, at another despairing of mercy, till he even cursed the day of his birth. Every step he took, he thought the next must land him in hell. The very ground he trode upon seemed unwilling to carry him.

CHAPTER XV.

"I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! Can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
ONE from the pitlless wave?
Is ALL that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?"

The open-air service being finished, the crowd quietly dispersed, deeply impressed with the singular address to which it had listened. From this service some retired to pray, some to mock, and the companions of Jim retired to the Lion to drink the wager of the little man with oily locks, who had failed to disperse the "saints." Mr. Power, the "Crawler," Miss Emily, and most of the teachers, retired to the school-room for a season of prayer. All being assembled, Miss Emily informed them of what had passed, and gave it as her firm conviction that the Lord was dealing with the Crusher's soul. A look of hesitation, a smile at Miss Emily's credulity, appeared in every face, as much as to say, "How can these things be?" Mr. Power, after

listening to Miss Emily's statements, exclaimed, "Friends, is anything too hard for the Lord?—be it unto this wicked man as our sister hath said, O Lord! Let us to our knees; and may the God of all grace remember poor Jim while we pray!" All knelt down, and Mr. Power and others most specially remembered him in prayer. Before separating, it was suggested that Miss Emily should call at Bramble Cottage, and, if possible, see Jim. To this she cheerfully consented, and they agreed during the week to make his case a subject of special prayer.

About the middle of the following day, after breakfast, Miss Emily presented herself at Bramble Cottage. The only member of the family at home besides Jim was his sister Margaret, the old people and Bob being at their work in connection with the Red Lion. To the question, "When will your brother Jim be at home?" his sister replied—

- "Yes, ma'am, he's at home now, and's likely to be at home for evermore. He's cracked, ma'am—clean cracked since Sunday evening, ma'am."
- "May I ask what you mean?" inquired Miss Emily. "Is he ill?"
- "Ill?" replied Margaret. "No, ma'am; he's mad." And here Margaret looked as much as if she had said, "And you, madam, have a hand in it."
 - "May I ask what has caused it?" inquired Miss Emily.
- "We don't know, ma'am," replied Margaret. "It has been on him ever since he heard the preacher last night: they say the sermon done it, ma'am."
- "Sermons, Margaret, never make people mad," responded Miss Emily; "they're intended to make people wise unto salvation."

Margaret began to fear that Miss Emily would preach to

her; so, with great coolness, she was about to close the door in her face, when Miss Emily stopped her by asking if she might see him; to which Margaret, with considerable warmth, replied—

"See him, ma'am! You can't see him; he would not see his father and mother this morning before they went—he won't see ye. He's mad—there's the top and bottom of it, ma'am."

"I think, Margaret, you are mistaken—you come to a point too quickly," responded Miss Emily. "We mustn't lift one another before we fall: he may not be mad—he may be mourning over his sins; and when people are in that state, although we are apt to say they are beside themselves, yet the Lord says it's the beginning of wisdom—the wisest step they ever took in all their lives."

"This I know, Miss Emily," rejoined Margaret: "my brother Jim has taken many a fool's leap, but this is the worst he ever took; he's clean cracked, ma'am—so there's an end of it, and I must turn in to my work."

"But, Margaret," inquired Miss Emily, "what does your brother do, so as to be called mad by you all?"

"Do, ma'am!" in a snappish voice retorted Margaret; "what does he not do? Ever since he came home last night he has never closed an eye in sleep, but runs about his room like a spread eagle, with an open Bible in his hand, groaning, praying, and reading; he speaks to none of us—only to himself he speaks, and to some one who seems to stare at him down from the ceiling. So, if that's like a person that's got all his change, it looks very odd to me."

"But when he does speak, what does he say, Margaret?" asked Miss Emily.

"Say, ma'am?—says nothing to the purpose," retorted Margaret. "He jest hits his breast and groans out, 'O

dear Jesus, dear Jesus!—hellish Jim, lost Jim!' That's about all he says, and then prays and reads."

"Could I see him?" earnestly entreated Emily.

"See him, ma'am—see him!" answered Margaret; "it's no use. I've stayed away from work ever since Sunday night to keep him from killing himself, and he won't see me from one end o' the day to the other. He won't eat, he won't speak, and he won't be seen, ma'am—it's no use: he's right over the traces; and, as father and Bob say, a strait-waistcoat and Bedlam will be the end o' the game."

"But, Margaret, will you say Miss Emily has called to see him?—perhaps he may yield; do make the attempt," tenderly entreated Miss Emily.

Somewhat touched by her entreaties, and yet irritated by the perseverance of the young saint, Margaret responded— "But if you did see him, you could make nothing on him; he would only stare at ye, turn from ye, and tear away to himself about the devil and sin and Jesus."

"Will you make the trial?" implored Emily.

At last, with great reluctance and not a little anger, Margaret consented—asked her from the door, and showed her into a dirty, ill-furnished parlour, and went up-stairs to Jim's room. Emily meanwhile seated herself on a broken chair, and earnestly entreated the Lord to bring about an interview: if granted, she as earnestly prayed to be guided in her words, and that in the hands of the Spirit they might become oil and wine to the wounded spirit of poor Jim. Margaret speedily returned, and informed Miss Emily that he would be down in a little, and hurriedly left the room. In a few moments Jim entered the parlour with a pallid cheek and hollow eye, clasping in his huge hand the Word of Life, now his only solace.

"Jim," remarked Miss Emily, "you look very ill."

"Ah, Miss Emily," replied Jim, "I am ill here" (pointing at the same time to his heart). "Once I was master of this crib, and all that was in it; but now it's my master."

"What is it, Jim, that so troubles you in your heart?" inquired Miss Emily.

"Ah, ma'am," responded Jim, "them words of Mr. Power, and them words of yours about the ship 'Whoso-EVER,' have fairly upset it; they seem to have wakened up in it as many devils as there are hairs on my head. ever since they've cried, 'Burn him-burn him!' cry rings in my ears of a night, that I'm afraid to sleep, lest they should carry my sinful scrap of a soul right off to hell before morning; their cry rings in my ears of a day-I hear it now when I'm a-telling of you. I can't flee from them anyhow: if I try to read, they go all on; if I try to pray, the words 'Burn him-burn him!' rise louder than my prayer, and I spring from my knees believing that the Lord has nothing to say to Jim. Oh, Miss Emily, I'm lost-lost! I'm a lost man, every inch on me, soul and body!" Here utterance failed him; his head fell heavily on the table, and he gave himself up to a paroxysm of tears and inconsolable anguish.

Miss Emily felt awed at the scene before her—silence sealed her lips. How to approach such profound sorrow she knew not. At length, summoning courage, in her softest accents she said—"But, Jim, Mr. Power spoke of nothing frightful, nor did I. Don't you remember, I spoke only of the love of Jesus, and said it was like a boundless ocean; and that even you might bathe in it, and be made rich by the mercies it carried on its bosom?"

"Ah, but, Miss Emily," responded Jim, "after I left you, a something came over me that fixed me to the earth—

a something that seemed to hold up before me like a picture my whole life; and, more than that, the twigs on the trees seemed like so many burning candles, and the leaves on the hedges seemed to sparkle with light-and all on them blazed round about the picture of my bad life. Oh, Miss Emily, a life like mine, with all its sins dangling about it. held up before your eyes, is a sight !--- an awful sight !--- so filthy, so insulting to God, so unkind to the dear Lord Jesus! And my heart, it will not love Him, will not be at peace with Him-never was, never will be. Emily, I must surely die! Even when I sit down to try and read, my cursed heart seems to swear: ay, Miss Emily, and when Jesus seems to come near it, a crowd of bad thoughts rush out against Him like a pack of hounds against a kennel-gate: it will not believe anything He says to it either. Oh. Miss Emily, the great God must serve me out for all this: I am. I am a lost man-that's sure! O that ever I was born! I've done nothing but sin since I was born: the hairs of my head, the nails of my hands and feet-yes, the very buttons on my coat-are all stained with it. Such a mass of corruption as I am must be buried in a grave as deep as hell!" Here again his head fell on the table, his face buried in his hands, and again he was overwhelmed in another flood of anguish. Miss Emily could for some time only weep and silently pray for the sufferer before her.

"But, Jim," she ventured to remark, "Jesus hath said, "Whosoever cometh I will in nowise cast out: that is, the vilest sinner may come, and even he will be welcome." These words seemed but to aggravate his agony, for he replied—

"Once, Miss Emily, that would have done; but something says within me, 'Too late, Jim,—too late!' Ah

ma'am, I must be speechless; I deserve my fate, I can't say one word against my sentence—even in my own soul something says. I deserve it. Ay, everything on earth and in heaven, too, must cry out, as they see me dragged away, 'Give it to him—serves him right! he has crushed many—now his own turn has come!' and I feel that my own soul will howl, 'Guilty—guilty!' all the way. Oh, my poor soul, Jesus cannot look upon thee! Yes, Satan, Jim's all your own now; he has worked hard for it, and must get his pay. But, oh! Miss Emily, such wages! Lost for ever!! Oh, ma'am, if that awful thought is not taken out of my heart, I must go mad even before I'm lost!"

Here again he was overcome, and fell forward heavily on the table; and his huge frame rocked to and fro with deep emotion. Miss Emily felt perfectly confounded; the few ideas and thoughts of which the excitement of the moment allowed her to be conscious were useless in the case—they were but as straws or rotten wood in dealing with Jim's big sorrow. She was shut up to the ejaculation of short prayers and the quotation of passages from Scripture. Once more, however, she essayed to administer comfort, and assuming a half-cheerful tone, she said, "Courage, man! better a living dog than a dead lion. Hear the words of the Lord, Jim: 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.'"

"Hold, ma'am!" exclaimed Jim. "It's truth you speak; but it's too late—the thing is done, my soul has killed itself; it's death is not coming—it's come, it's in the jaws of it. O that I had never been born!"

After this last characteristic reply she felt farther effort for the present useless. For the moment the consolation of the Gospel seemed to fall into his heart like drops of cold water among bars of glowing iron; it had apparently no abiding power, but appeared to be dissipated and immediately to pass away. She resolved to leave him in the hands of the Redeemer, who, at last, she felt convinced, although by fire, would lead him to a wealthy place. On leaving him, however, she made one more effort, believing, whatever appeared to the contrary, the Word of God would not return to Him void. On shaking hands with him she said to him, "THIS I know: 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin.' That is the truth of God. Throw yourself into that crimson flood; and as at first, so say I now, that although your heart were as black as hell's own gates, that blood will make it as white as snow!—Good bye!—'at eventide it will be light.'" So saying, she left Jim alone with God.

According to appointment, she met Mr. Power and a few of the teachers. She reported to them her interview with Jim, and she earnestly entreated every one present not only to pray for him, but to exert themselves to remove him as soon as possible from the influence of Bramble Cottage and the Red Lion. After prayer for him—special prayer for the emancipation of his soul from its darkness and fears—the friends parted, glorifying God. Just before separating, Mr. Power stated it had occurred to him, during the meeting, that possibly he could find employment for him on his own premises; and the Crawler was appointed to wait upon him as early as possible, and, as soon as he could bear it, prepare his mind for the change.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Fighting alone to-night—
With not even a stander by
To cheer me on in the fight,
Or to hear me when I cry.
Only the Lord can hear,
Only the Lord can see
The struggle within, how dark and drear,
Though quiet the outside be."

At a very early hour the "Crawler" started to call at Bramble Cottage, in order to have some conversation with Jim, and, if possible, to inform him of Mr. Power's desire to employ him in his service. As he approached the house, he saw Jim seated in a wooden shed, with his Bible on his knee, absorbed in thought.

"Good morning, brother,—good morning," said the Good Body, inclining his head to the side, showing his teeth and rubbing his hands in the most approved fashion.

Jim, somewhat astonished, looked up and replied, "Don't call me brother, Mr. Mount; I'm not one of the family of God—I'm a castaway, a prodigal among the swine: I have been found there, will be left there, and very likely will soon die there."

"But," responded Mount, "my dear fellow, God is merciful—He's not the harsh Being you take Him to be: if you're sorry for your sins, you may trust His great and tender mercy with the rest."

"That God is merciful none can doubt," remarked Jim; "but for ME there is none,—can't see it, can't feel it, can't believe it. When I look up, my sins seem to darken the air; and when I think about the bones I've bruised, the souls I've ruined, and the awful thoughts that live in this sink" (pointing to his breast), "even without my past life, are enough to sink me in the pit and bury me at the bottom. Oh, sir, sorrow won't kill my sins—won't draw mercy into my heart; sorrow for debt won't pay debt. That kind of salvation won't suit poor Jim: there must be something different to that, sir,—harder than that, sir,—to clean and split the flint that lies in here."

"But, my dear friend," said Mount, in oily accents, "we are also to call upon the name of the Lord,—pray, you know, Jim."

"Ah, sir." mournfully replied Jim, "prayer ain't any good to me: it's just like my sorrow—it's spoilt in my hands; for as soon as I try to, for the one word I put up the devil puts up ten against me. I feel never a word of mine reaches the ear of God—I feel I must be lost! Oh. sir, I'm lost already! I'm kept here, like one of those green faggots at your foot, that I may get ready for the fire. But I deserve it; I feel it'll be quite right to send the bulldog of Middle Lane to the left on the great day of the Lord. I've lost my chance, sir,-kept Him too long on the doorstep, and He's gone-gone for ever!" Here he became quiet, heaved a sigh, and stared on his Bible, the pages of which he watered with his tears. For a moment Mount surveyed poor Jim, and, from his attitude, in his secret soul seemed to say, "I'm the missionary of the district: I ought to be able to make an impression, and, from what I know of soul-trouble, I ought to be able to minister to a mind diseased."

The Good Body re-opened the conversation by saying, "My dear brother, may I ask you what portion of the sweet Word you were reading as I approached you?"

"Don't call me brother: oh, sir, don't; you but mock me, knowing my character as you do," exclaimed poor Jim.

"Come, come, dear friend," continued Mount, "there were sinners as vile as you among that crowd which John saw, and which no man could number. There is mercy with God, Jim, only but seek it."

"Sir," with great earnestness inquired Jim, "do tell me but this: how did they come there? was it by sorrow and by prayer? If so, I must be damned, for I've neither. Oh, sir, is that the only way?—then I'm lost!"

"Jim," responded Mount, "I've but my blessed Master's words—and they are as gold tried in the fire, you know; and here they are: 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.' There, my suffering brother,—is that not cold water to thy thirsty soul?"

"Ah, Mr. Mount, the Lord has sent you to seal my doom; for the Lord says, 'Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.' And you know, sir, I've refused every call He has sent me—and that you know. Oh, sir, your gospel's no gospel to me. You're scattering seeds round a bird that's tied, sir: it flies out to peck, but it's no good—it's pulled back again. My soul is like that bird: if some one don't cut the string, it'll never reach a seed—it must starve to death. I tell you, sir, your gospel's no gospel to me."

"But, my dear Jim," continued Mount, "God cannot lie. Do not shut yourself out from the mercy of God.

God is merciful to all that call upon Him in truth. Earnestly continue to seek it, you will have the blessing."

"I am in EARNEST, Mr. Mount," replied Jim. wouldn't be in earnest with hell at his heels? I do cry night and day till my throat's as dry as an oven brick, yet that something I want never comes. Your plan may suit some souls, but O, sir, a soul like mine needs different measures, stronger measures. Ah, sir, if ever I'm saved, it must be by Miss Emily's plan—a dive into the blood, the precious blood! O, sir, that the strong hand of God would but hurl me into that. Miss Emily says that's the true cure, the only cure, for she's tried it. Sometimes my poor soul seems to be near it, but just then something seems to say, 'Jim, you've broken too many heads, ruined too many souls, and lit your pipe too often with the leaves of God's Book, to be washed there.' Then my sins seem to rush out of my heart, and spread like a cloud of steam between my soul and the blood, and all is dark again. O, sir, I do feel I'm a lost man, soul and body."

"But, dear Jim," said Mount, "earnestly ask Christ to wash you, and He will, He will—only earnestly cry."

"I do, I do," exclaimed the wretched man, and sank into the silence of despair.

Mount utterly failed in administering comfort to poor Jim's crushed and awakened soul. And why did he fail? Because he preached to him a gospel without a Christ! an atonement without blood! a justification without faith! a coming to Jesus without the Spirit! No whiteness of teeth, no amount of rubbing of hands, no quantity of whining nor aptness in quoting Scripture, apart from Jesus received into the heart and held there by faith, will make a minister of Christ. But, with Jesus in his heart believed and loved, and followed in a holy life, through sanctifi-

cation of the Spirit, any man may be as the mouth of God to weary souls, and to them, whether from the pulpit or the bench, his words will be words in season.

Mount, after making every effort to mitigate the anguish of poor Jim, but without success, at last, dejected and sorrowful, delivered Mr. Power's message about employment, and left him in his misery.

During the succeeding month Mr. Power and Miss Emily frequently visited him, and preached to him Christ—not earnestness, not prayer—but Christ as He is freely offered to sinners in the Gospel. Yet God, for His glory, kept him in bonds for many days, and in this state of mind he entered the service of Mr. Power.

CHAPTER XVII.

"O God! what rapturous joy is this!—
I who have seen Thee face to face,
Seen swooning in ecstatic bliss,
Dissolved in some Divine embrace;
For is it life, or is it death,
Soft breathing on my countenance;
That floats like music from beneath,
And lifts me up as in a trance?"

At the oft-renewed request of Mr. Power, Jim at length made his appearance in his garden, sad in soul, as was his usual, but much disposed to work. The gardener found in him a diligent and a faithful assistant, and of him used often to say, he had but one gleam of sunshine all the day—when the bell rang to summon Mr. Power's domestics to morning prayers.

Often did his master steal down through the garden, and throw himself in Jim's way, and with some sweet quotation from the Gospel endeavour to cheer and revive his depressed and wounded soul. But vain was the help of man; even the burning and loving words of Miss Emily now ceased to charm, and the oily but lifeless phrases of Mount only deepened his gloom, and sprinkled salt on his wounds. All Mr. Power's believing friends—and to each of them had Jim been introduced—plied him in vain with every sunny Gospel truth. It was now the opinion of all who had conversed with him that a settled despair was fast

gathering round him, and if God interfered not insanity must be the result. His soul began to loathe all kinds of food; he was losing flesh fast, and his eyes often, as he paused in his work and turned them to heaven in praver. were filled with that frenzy which forebodes mental aberration. All that his friends could do for him now was to feel for him and pray for him; and that they did without ceasing. A crisis was at hand! He began to see visions in the clouds, among the trees, and under the clods he turned with his spade. As he bent over the tub in which he washed himself, he began to see scowling upon him the face of some one he had injured in bygone days; or when reading his Bible, occasionally he could see Satan watching him, and waiting to pounce upon him the first propitious moment; his destruction he felt was only a matter of time, depending simply on the command from on high, and at every moment he expected it to take place. Like the vessel in the midst of the tempest, reeling, breaking up, and fast going down within sight of home, and before friends who can only weep but cannot help, such was Jim's soul in the hands of his friends.

For full two months thus did the storm rage in and around the soul of poor Jim. Towards the close of this period, one Saturday evening he retired up-stairs, as was his wont, to read, and pray, and weep. So terrible were the thoughts of his heart on this occasion, so infernal were the suggestions made to his soul by the devil, that he found prayer impossible. Turning to his Bible in an agony of despair for relief, how was his sorrow increased in finding that it also seemed to be leagued against him, and refused even one drop of comfort! After standing for a moment in amazement, he again turned to the sacred page, but with no better success! Its lines and words faded into dark

specks before his eye. "What!" he exclaimed, "thou wretched, depraved heart, wilt thou refuse not only to prav. but actually close thine eye upon God's own Word? Fool thou art. Is the devil to be the first up to time—eh? O. my God, is my time come? I cannot go to hell, my Saviour! I can't face a lost eternity, never, never! soul, O my soul, awake, awake, vou're going fast, fast! cannot, I will not, I must not perish. Dear Jesus, if Thou wilt not have me, I'll have Thee." Here he tried to clutch at some object, and in the attempt he stumbled forward. and fell on the bed. Whether he had swooned, or from exhaustion had fallen asleep, he could never tell, but he found himself in the same attitude just as the Sabbath Scarcely had consciousness returned began to dawn. before his soul was again plunged into the same awful conflict as that in which it suffered on the preceding night. As the timid child flies the dark room: as the schoolbov scampers, not daring to look behind, through the old churchyard; so poor Jim hastened from his garret into the fields, and wandered for several hours without purpose or The ringing of the church bell at length summoned him to consciousness, and reminded him of his neglected toilet, and made him retrace his steps homeward. Just as he entered the lane leading to Bramble Cottage he met old Sarah Bradley and her husband Robert. Sarah and Robert. now far advanced in years, were well known in the neighbourhood as a couple who had walked in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless for many years. and Robert feared God above many. Often had Jim in days gone by raised at their expense the laugh of the passerby; frequently had he caused the children of the lane to follow them with derisive shouts as they passed to their little meeting-house. Remarkable for their piety, they

were equally so for their simple manners and the quaintness of their style of dress: everything they wore seemed to be a protest against the shifting fashions of the day, and seemed to say to modern times and ways, "Ye must come to us, we cannot go to you." In appearance and in mental power Sarah was the more remarkable of the two; her eyes large and soft, beaming with intelligence, her features rather striking than fine, and when viewed from under her huge bonnet they wore a weird-like expression. Be this as it may, old Sarah Bradley was no weird; every inch of her leant towards her Lord, as the sunflower towards the sun, and all recollections of Endor vanished when the tones of her voice reached your ear in a passage of the Gospel. Jim approached he hung down his head, and intended to pass them, and would have done so, but for Sarah. saluted him as follows:-

"Hie thee, lad, I have been hearing good news of thee, and ever since I heard them I've remembered thee before the Lord. Why so sad, Jim? Don't ye take with your new Master—ain't got into His ways yet? Hold thee a little, He'll grow on thee yet, and His service will be marrow to your bones and light to your eyes, lad. I must see thee of a week-day, and know all about the way the Lord is leading thee; I must go. But stay thee, lad; we must not part without a bit of the children's bread; look to John viii. 11, where it is said, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.' Good bye, lad; and may the Lord perfect that which concerneth thee." So saying, she shook him by the hand, and passed on to join her husband.

It was as if Christ had spoken to Jim from heaven. He evidently thought so, for he continued gazing in mute astonishment up into the sky. At last, bursting into tears

of joy, he exclaimed, "And wilt Thou not condemn me, Lord? O Mercy, big as God Himself, wilt Thou not condemn him who is condemned by everybody, even by his own heart? This must be Christ: no one else would speak to Jim in this way." Hurrying home, he rushed upstairs, and with trembling hand turned to the passage, and read it over and over and over. At length, being assured that the passage was a portion of the very Word of God, he fell upon his knees, and placing his finger on the verse he exclaimed with awful earnestness, "Is this Thy message, O Lord Jesus, to hell-deserving Jim—the Crusher, the bruiser of Middle Lane—after all he has done? Is it so? Can it be so? Will it be always so? Of a truth, then. Thou art God! Thou shalt be Jim's God for evermore! Thou art my Saviour, my own Saviour!" Thus was Jim ushered into peace, that peace which passeth all understanding! The hour of release was followed by such a sense of God's forgiving love in Christ as for a season to overwhelm him; or, to use his own expressive language in describing this part of his experience, so powerfully did a sense of God's love come upon him as to "send his old heart into as many shivers as if it had been made of glass and put on a fence, and there pelted to pieces by all the boys in the parish." The rest of that day was spent almost entirely in singing, till at last, weary and worn, he retired to rest, and slept as he had never slept before: he assures us, to this day, that sleep "passed through bones and flesh into his very soul."

Reader, in your life has there been such a moment? Have you ever felt repose from a sense of pardon welling up from the inmost soul, and quietly sealing your eyes?

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Arouse thee, Soul!
God made not thee to sleep
Thy hour of earth in doing nought—away;
He gave thee power to keep.
O! use it for His glory, while you may:
Arouse thee, Soul!"

JIM arose betimes the following Monday. With eyes still weeping for joy, with heart still grieving for sin, and with faith still clinging to Jesus, he commenced the toils of the week. As the day advanced, Mr. Power cautiously sauntered towards the spot where Jim was at work. The good man could scarcely believe his ears as the strains of a well-known hymn reached them from behind the hedge, where Jim was at work. "Can it be Jim?" more than once inquired Mr. Power of himself. Stealing nearer to the spot to make sure, he could distinctly hear Jim humming to himself these beautiful lines:—

"O to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from thy courts above."

The joy felt by Mr. Power on hearing the song of freedom chanted by Jim can be more easily imagined than described. Such was the gladness of his heart as almost to constrain him to reply through the hedge:—

"O my Jesus, Thou art mine,
With all Thy grace and power;
I am now, and shall be Thine
When time shall be no more:
Thou remit me by Thy death;
Thy blood from guilt has set me free;
My fresh springs of hope, and faith,
And love, are all in Thee."

Mr. Power, for the moment controlling his feelings, quietly moved towards the small gate which opened through the hedge, affording an entrance to a large field in which were grazing a few cows and horses. In this field, near an old elm tree, Jim was engaged in digging a trench. There he is, dear fellow—his broad, hairy chest fanned by the morning breeze; his brawny arms, with their rope-like muscles, naked to the shoulders, and his spade glancing in the sunshine.

"Good morning, Jim," said Mr. Power, as he approached him.

After beholding him for a moment, and with a smile covering his whole face, Jim with great warmth replied—

"It's all over now, sir; He's done it—He's done it—look ye here, sir!" And, springing from the trench, he led Mr. Power to the elm tree. "There, sir"—pointing to an open Testament, and putting his master's finger on the 11th verse of the 8th chapter of John—"read, sir: 'Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.' There, sir, is a new way of wiping out a fellow's big score, leaving not one chalk on the stick; ain't it generous? It's just like Jesus,

He does everything in a big way; no security required, sir; no squire's recommendation wanted neither—all free—a brand new salvation! He is a God, my precious Jesus! Oh! sir, had I ten thousand souls, I'd give them all to Him, dear Saviour that He is! And now, sir, I've but one wish, and that is that some day soon, as I'm praying or singing Him a bit of my heart, He will cry, 'Jim, lay down your spade, and come home.' Oh! there's no place like home, sir—sweet home; but I'm pleased, sir, to dig and pray till the time's up, for all that. But, sir, it surely cannot be wrong to wish to grasp the hand, and stare into the face of One who, of His own free will, has given to a poor sinner like me such a lift as to save him from hell for ever. Oh! it can't be wrong, sir, to long to be with Jesus."

"Oh! no, Jim," replied Mr. Power, unwilling to quell his young love; "it can't be wrong to long to be in heaven with Jesus. You go on digging, singing, and praying, and some day soon He'll tell you all about it. But, Jim, suppose we kneel down and unite in thanking Jesus for your deliverance." Here they both knelt in the trench, and Mr. Power most heartily thanked the Lord for all He had done for Jim. On rising from his knees, Mr. Power grasped Jim by the hand, and as a brother wished him "God speed" in the narrow way, and disappeared behind the hedge.

After a few months' attendance on the means of grace his knowledge increased, his mind expanded, his faith strengthened, and all at once he was seized with a strong desire to do something as a mark of gratitude to the Lord for His lovingkindness to his soul. He was not qualified to speak in public—a fact he soon discovered by painful experience on more occasions than one; yet he felt he must not be idle. After much earnest prayer for direction as to

the right employment of his time, direction did come to him in the following simple manner. As he sat at breakfast one morning, reading about the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, the following thought rose in his mind:—"Oh! then, there's a quiet way of doing business for the Lord; they prayed, always prayed, I suppose? So will I—so will I, Lord, and my old garret will be my cave. Thanks be to God, there is some way a fellow can use his tongue for God without knowing much of grammar. To the Lord will I pray for my own soul, for my kindred, for all men, for all Thy people, and for the triumph of Thy cause everywhere. Ah! Lord, prayer shall be my bit."

From the hour that happy thought occurred to him, up. to the present moment, he has kept his vow. Regularly every night it is his custom to retire for some hours for special prayer. How large-hearted is this humble follower Daily for hours does he wrestle, entreating of the Cross! blessings on every individual movement in the kingdom of Christ, for a world lying in wickedness, and for the whole household of faith. Often praying specially and perseveringly, days and weeks together, for individuals, and ceasing not until the Lord made known his will concerning The real and business-like style in which he performs his "bit." as he terms it, is interesting in a high degree. His unceasing prayerfulness being well known to his friends, they often resort to him, and ask him for an interest in his prayers. If the request is one his conscience approves, he puts it on a slip of paper, with the date, and on his return home he lays this paper before the Lord, and pleads the case as recorded, taking the very first opportunity afterwards to ask the individual concerned "if Father has begun to move in his case vet, because I have told Him

all about it." The writer has known a person's individual and family cares pending at the throne of grace for weeks in Jim's hands; often has he heard him during the period of suspense question the person concerned as to the result, and more than once has the writer been a partaker of his joy on the arrival of the answer. Should the matter of prayer be one of public interest, and such it frequently is, no broker glances at the share list with one half the interest Jim scans the public prints in order to know the result. Yes, often does this humble working man enclose within the arms of his faith the globe—the entire globe, and yearn over and plead its interests before the Lord. Who, after this, will assert that real godliness ministers to narrowness of spirit? great day of the Lord alone will declare how much the world, the Church, and the individual interests of Christ's children, owe to the wrestlings of Jim in the garret of Bramble Cottage.

But Jim does not confine himself exclusively to a life of secret prayer. His burning zeal finds an outlet by another channel. It also partakes of the "quiet way," but not just so quiet as in his garret.

From the first hour he became concerned for his soul, he denied himself the use of all intoxicating liquors. From his little savings thus increased he furnished his wardrobe. This done, he found his money still increase, and how to lay the surplus out for the Lord soon became a matter of debate with his tender conscience, and a subject for prayer. One evening, while passing the shop of the village stationer, his attention was turned to some of the cheap publications of the Religious Tract Society. On inquiry, finding them so cheap, he bought a few, and distributed them among the lads of the village. This new mode of doing good had many charms for Jim; it was active, it also afforded opportunities

of bringing Christ before the notice of some who would have spurned invitations from his lips, and often it called forth the spirit of adventure and the exercise of courage, both prominent features in his character. His first large purchase of tracts took place shortly after his interview with the village stationer, and was brought about in the following way. Mr. Power required him to visit London on some business, and Jim resolved on that occasion to invest all his spare cash in the purchase of tracts. Accordingly, on the appointed day he went by rail to the metropolis. After duly attending to his master's business, he found before the starting of the train he had time to spare, and this he determined to spend in searching for some depôt of the Tract Society.

After sauntering about for some time, and almost despairing of success, he at length espied a board on which in large letters was written, "Publications of the Religious Tract Society sold here." Stepping into the place, he stared about him like a child in a toy-shop. In a few minutes, a little dapper shopman came up to him, and inquired if he could serve him with anything. Jim, eyeing the little man for some time, replied, "I don't want ye to serve ME with anything, sir; I want ye to bear a hand to help me in serving the Master." Burying his hand in his breeches-pocket, he pulled out a hairy purse, and emptying its contents on the counter, Jim exclaimed, "There, sir-give me as many preachers for Jesus as that'll purchase." The shopman, somewhat amused with his peculiar customer, speedily perceived Jim wanted tracts, and immediately inquired what he would like. "Ah, sir," replied Jim, "I wish I could tell ye; but, being only a few months out of the wood, am not very good in seeing yet: but what I want is a lot o' little books that can tell sinners how to find Jesus—that can go through the heart like arrows; little books that can bite, blister, and tease sinners, till they're mighty glad to run to the big Doctor in heaven for salve: that's the kind of books I want—now ye can do the rest." After a considerable time had been spent in making a selection, a huge pile of little books and tracts was placed before Jim on the counter as his. "Now, sir," remarked the shopman, "I've done the best I can for you." Jim, after looking at the pile for some time, said to the shopman, "I suppose, sir, they're the genuine article, and, if well handled, will do their work?" On being assured that all was right in this respect, he swung his parcel over his shoulder and left the shop, saying, "Now, old Cloven-foot, in Christ's name look out! I'll make your walls ring and shake: here's plenty of powder and shot now, old fellow!"

CHAPTER XIX.

"Methinks I hear the voices of the blessed as they stand, Singing in the sunshine of the sinless land; Oh! would that I were with them, amid their shining throng, Mingling in their worship, joining in their song."

In the present chapter the writer will present Jim's inner life as a believer before the reader. And let us begin by giving in his own words the estimate he, from the very first, formed of himself, acts upon now as the only true one, and, from all the writer knows of him, he is likely to do so to the close of life.

One beautiful evening in the early part of autumn the writer, with Father Firm, arrayed in top-coat and muffler, leaning on his arm, strolled down a lane near the old man's house. The aged saint, full of grace and truth, was well in health, high in spirits, and inclined to talk—uttering big thoughts concerning God and man at every turn. He was in one of his tenderest moods. The playfulness of the child, the softness of the girl, and the sturdiness of the veteran, seemed blended in the old man's breast that evening: he was like a racy volume written expressly to illustrate the power of Divine grace over human nature. How particularly inviting was the evening, too!—the reaper had just left the field, and, with him, joke, laugh, and song; of man no trace remained save his work—long lines of sheaves.

Now and then a rabbit, too, darted across the field, as if annoyed at the nakedness of the land; the little bird was retiring to rest, its song indicating repose as it softly faded away, reminding one of the faltering tones of a child's evening hymn after a long day's play. A sound like the murmur of the sea softened by distance rose from among scattered leaves on the road, as the evening breeze played among them; and the sun in the west rested against a wall of amber, like a shield fresh from the arm of some weary warrior at the close of the fight.

After passing the church, we had got fairly into the open country, and felt alone with the God of peace.

"Well, my son," exclaimed old Thomas, "do you enjoy your evening stroll—does the scene around gladden or sadden you?"

"I am anything but sad," replied the writer. "The beauty of the evening—the fields covered with the spoils of harvest, securing at once 'seed to the sower and bread to the eater'—are anything but sad sights. And," continued the writer, "there is besides an undefinable joy felt in observing such a scene as a harvest-field: all around lie the results—the grand total of the many labours of many agents: the sunlight and summer heat, showers and dews. winds and snows, bird and beast, combine their influence with that of man to bring about such a result—a harvest-Consider also one other fact, and that the most important of all—the Wisdom that regulated the influence as to time, manner, degree, and place of the various agents. and the scene before us is complete. All was guided, moderated, and applied by the Hand that was nailed to the tree! Tell us, father, where that man is to be found who could behold such a scene and be sad?"

"True, boy," responded Thomas; "a gracious and phi-

losophic answer to my question, and rather an uncommon way of looking at a harvest-field. But how differently does the scene strike me! You know I'm fond of picture-making, and you say my pictures sometimes instruct you: my portfolio will soon be full, the hand of the sketcher will soon be stiff, and the artist will, ere long, be left in the corner of some churchyard, like one of these sheaves on the field left to dry, till the angels of God come and bear him home on their shining wain to Christ's granary.—Now for my pic-As I looked across the fields covered with ture, boy. sheaves, standing in the last rays of the departing light, I compared the fading day to a dying saint. Up in the west there, it lies on its deathbed in perfect calmness-no noise, no bustle, no surprise; its feet are gathered up; dignity and glory all around; and the little patches of cloud glide about the scene in reverent silence, just like the ministering members of a family in a father's sick chamber; and the sun imparts to the face of the expiring day that chastened light which almost always appears in the countenance of a departing saint when, with his back for ever turned on the world, he catches the first glimpse of Christ in His glory, and when the songs of saints and angels round the throne burst on his ear for the first time. Ay, the dying day, too, can look down on its work—the fields covered with sheaves,—like the blood-washed labourer in the vineyard of Jesus, who steps peacefully through the everlasting doors to receive the promised penny from the hand of the Lord of the harvest. O my Father and my God, grant that the scene we now behold may be the emblem of our last hour! May the face of Jesus shed a glory on ours! May the music of heaven cause our souls to dance through the everlasting doors, as did David before the ark of the Lord! And may our last lingering look

behind be met by our little fields of labour covered with sheaves of souls! O grant us this, in honour of and for the sake of Jesus! Amen."

After a considerable pause, and after his exulting spirit had become somewhat calm, he turned his face toward me, his features wearing the most heavenly smile I ever witnessed on a human countenance—it seemed to reflect the very glory of the setting sun on which he had been gazing. After looking at me for a moment, he said, "Son, they that are near home are often home-sick, and amuse their friends with home scenes. This is another of old Thomas's dreams of Fatherland; it may be the last you'll ever get from his lips. My boy, remember your life on earth is like a ring without its gems, an eye without its lustre, or a harp without its strings, if ALL its energy is not drawn from Jesus and the scenery of the Holy Land beyond Jordan."

The writer was just about to make a remark, when old Thomas stopped him by exclaiming, "Well, here comes the Crusher; the Lord has work on hand to-night; let's draw him into talk. Let this be another journey to Emmaus—may our hearts burn within us." Scarcely had the old man finished the sentence before Jim was at our side, happy, very happy in mind, washed and refreshed after the toil of the day. He, too, had strolled abroad for the enjoyment of a silent hour with God.

"Well, my son, we have just turned out for a little fresh air," remarked Thomas; "'tis so sweet to muse beside a newly reaped field with a friend."

"That it is," replied Jim, "when you get alongside a real 'un; but a fail-me-never mate nowadays is as precious as a Jew's eye, eh?"

"True, Jim," answered Thomas; "but such are to be found, if you are on the look-out for them; otherwise our

life would be like a dance without the music—a very quiet affair, and often out of step, eh?"

"True, master," retorted Jim; "life is a dance, and a right queer dance, too. Some have to foot it without music, others go it to any spring that's played, and one that I know has gone pretty far in his dance, keeping time to the rough music, every tune of which is a regular snapper, filling heels and hands with a kind of devil's fire, making you bump the ceiling with your head every fling, upset everything that comes in your way; and when you stop a trice, you don't know which side is uppermost. Life—such a life—is a dance!"

"Jim, will you humour an old man by comparing some steps in your dance with a few in his?" asked Thomas.

"Sir," replied Jim, "you have had a teacher; and my dance, compared with yours, would be comparing a garden kept by a first-class gardener and one in which weeds, taters, roses, and cabbages, have all been allowed to grow together. Sir, your life's like a dance in the opera—all the bad steps taken out. Mine is like the jig of some of them little dirty, hairy coves, that were over here from Africa some time ago."

"True, Jim," remarked Thomas: "I have had some helps that you have not had, but in my life there have been some cantrips as wild as your own. Sir, Jesus is my witness, I am one of the greatest sinners saved from hell."

This was uttered with so much dignity, so much humility, so much feeling, and yet so simply, as to make Jim gaze at him with astonishment. For a few moments we all walked on in silence, till Jim stood still, gazed on the old man, and with nearly as much dignity, humility, feeling, and simplicity, inquired of him, "Sir, did ever your hands

do anything that, whenever it came into your memory, made your ears crack, your heart and your liver kick your ribs—eh?"

"Jim, you don't know old Thomas yet; but God knows him. Were He to let slip down between us that leaf in his book where my life is written, and you to pick it up and read it, not only would your ears crack and all your inwards bound against your ribs, but your breath, sir, would depart from you, and never return."

Such was Thomas's characteristic reply, uttered in a voice shrill with excitement, and with tears streaming down his cheeks. Poor Jim felt confused, and seemed like the wedding guest in the "Ancient Mariner," held fast by the old man's glittering eye.

"I say, sir," with simple earnestness responded Jim, "were it not for your wet cheeks, I would think you were taking your 'nap' off me. You know very well I'm the biggest scamp in all the country for miles round—nay, in all England, in the world. There's no good you putting your score agen mine; one scratch in mine would cover the LOT o' yours."

"Jim," exclaimed old Father Firm, in his firmest mood, "remember the difference between thirty years and seventy, and every hour of the seventy is spotted like the hide of the leopard with iniquity."

Jim, with rising energy, responded, "Why, sir, the very last go in my jig would cover with spots as many leopards' hides as would reach from here to the moon and back again, and the spots would be so close as to defy you to put the point of a needle between them. Each spot, too, as black as the devil's own wing."

"Well, Jim," entreated the old man, with increasing interest, "just describe to me your last big go in your jig."

"That I never shall, sir," replied Jim. "Some of the things, if you can hear them, which I suffered after it was all over, I may tell you, that you may know how long the arm of the love of Jesus is, and how true it is when it is said He can 'save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.'"

With the deepest emotion and contrition he described his experience in passing from death unto life, after the last foul deed of his career of sin. Suffice it to say, that for bitterness of self-accusation, profound views of the nature of sin, and true and lively appreciation of the love of God in forgiving his transgressions, that narrative has seldom been equalled, and scarcely ever surpassed, by any similar narrative it has been the lot of the writer to peruse. And the same humble estimate of himself, expressed in the quaint slang language of the above conversation, is the estimate he still forms of himself, although years have passed since he formed it. If there is any difference between the estimate formed then, and that held by him now, the difference lies in this-he condemns himself more thoroughly; and if in his song of praise for salvation there is a note louder and sweeter than all the rest, it is that which says, "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing."

CHAPTER XX.

"With single mind I see him pass
'Mid heathens, Christians oft, alas!
Like heathens, aliens to the love
That daily woos our hearts above,
I see him striving all to bring
Unto the love of love's own King."

THE reader has seen Jim make his first purchase of tracts, and the writer doubts not he came to the conclusion that a more original, yet striking, scene was never witnessed in any of the district repositories of the Religious Tract Society.

Perhaps even more original and even more striking still is one of the modes he employs in distributing his tracts. His own title for it is "twigging a swell." The following incident will explain it better than any formal description. For years back, when the weather permits, he sets out every Saturday afternoon on some lonely road, enveloped in a coat with huge pockets, each pocket gorged with fly-leaves, tracts, and little books. In the gentlest accents he accosts every lady and gentleman as they pass, in a few quaint words says something for his Master, gives them a tract, and leaves them. But to meet these stray individuals forms not the only object of his journey, his main object being to "twig a swell;" that is, to say something for Jesus to any young gentleman returning from the city in the evening from

business. When such is the object of his journey, he generally finds his way to some railway station about three or four o'clock in the afternoon.

Towards the fall of the year, Jim, as usual, loaded with tracts, took his stand near a station lying a good way from London, among a number of villas occupied by city mer-After much ejaculatory prayer while standing about, the well-known scream announced the arrival of a train, which was followed by a crowd of business gentlemen dispersing, bearing with them the everlasting black bag, or paper bag, or rush bag, to their respective homes. On this dispersing mass Jim's eve was fixed. "To whom among them all am I sent by my Father?" had scarcely escaped his lips when his attention was turned towards a young gentleman, "stately and handsome," struggling on the platform with a large black dog. Jim intuitively whispered, "That's my man," and made towards him, and, being very well acquainted with the nature of dogs, he assisted the gentleman in managing, quieting, and ultimately leading the dog to the gate of his master's house. After the young gentleman had handed over the dog to his servant, he turned towards Jim, complimented him on his knowledge of dogs, and offered him some money for his services on the occasion. To the surprise of the gentleman, Jim very politely refused.

Jim remarked with a smile, "And so you know my Master, sir?"

"Your master!" exclaimed the gentleman; "how should I know him? You are a perfect stranger to me."

"My Master knows you right well, sir, whether you know Him or His servant," replied Jim; "and I'm the bearer of a message from Him directed to you."

"You must be mistaken, my man," remarked the

gentleman; "I neither know you nor your master. Who is your master? Is he in business in the city, or country, and what is the name of the firm?"

In answer Jim returned, "Yes, sir, He's in a large way—does a large business in city and village, but manages His own business Himself; His is not a partnership concern—there's none but His own name above the door and on the bill-heads."

"Well, my young man," said the gentleman, looking at his watch, "as you'll take no reward for helping me with my dog, I can only thank you and go, for my dinner hour has arrived: and now your message."

"Sir," said Jim, "the name of my Master is Jesus, and here is His message;" putting into his hand a little book entitled, "Is it well with thee?"

The gentleman looked in Jim's face perfectly confounded, and began to move from the gate. "But, sir," continued Jim, "I was bidden bring back an answer. What shall I say? Can I say it is well with thee?"

"O, my dear fellow," with a smile said the young man, "this is not the time to speak about these things; we do all that business on a Sunday."

"Yes, sir," retorted Jim, "but if you should not see Sunday, what then?"

"O, we must chance it," gaily replied the gentleman, evidently very much amused with the simplicity, originality, and earnestness of Jim.

"But, sir," entreated Jim, "hear me once more. My Master's timepiece is always right; if this is not the right time for you to reply to His message, it's the first time I ever knew HIM make a mistake. Believe me, HE's always up to the mark, and never on any occasion sends His messengers on a fool's errand. Young man, answer that

question Now! Take it for granted that He did not take the trouble to send that message all the way from heaven, and poor Jim, his messenger, so many miles out of his beat, for nothing. This is the right spot, the right time, and you're the right person. Again I ask you, in my Master's name, What shall I take back as your reply? That at this very moment it is well with thee?"

These words were pressed home by the Spirit of God with such earnest simplicity as to become irresistible. The gentleman solemnly replied, "It is not well with me; and, my good fellow, it has not been well with me for some years back, and I often envy the happiness of the man that fears God: but—"

"There's no BUTS in the message, sir," replied Jim; "if it's not well with thee, it must be ill with thee."

For a moment the gentleman in silence beheld Jim, and was evidently much moved. Laying hold of his hand, he, as it were, unwittingly drew him in at the gate, and Jim found himself sauntering along the garden-walk with the young man. After a few moments of deep mental agony, the young man exclaimed, "This is of God, my friend; my sins have found me out. I am a backslider; once I was a Sunday-school teacher; but, through the temptations of a prosperous business, I have been allured from the ways of God; and now I tremble to think of the past, and dare not look to the future. Ah, my friend, I would give my whole fortune to be again at peace with God." Here he relapsed into silence, and gave evidence of the most pungent sorrow.

Jim spent a portion of that evening with him in reading the Scriptures and prayer. Shortly after this incident Jim had the indescribable pleasure of beholding the young man restored to the ways of holiness and peace. Now every moment of leisure allowed him by his large business is spent in labouring for the kingdom of Christ, and his life adorns the doctrine and gospel of God his Saviour.

Let this, dear reader, suffice to illustrate what Jim means by "twigging a swell." Do you believe in Jesus? Go, thou, and do likewise. Are you still in your sins? Then Jim brings from heaven the same message to you, "Is it well with thee?" Were Jim at your elbow, and whispering in your ear, "I was bidden bring back an answer," how solemn to look up in his honest face and say, without a sigh or a fear, "Tell your Master it is not well with me!"

CHAPTER XXI.

"'Tis Phœbe Dawson, pride of Lammas fair;
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love inspiring lies,
Compassion first assailed her gentle heart
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
Then fly temptation, youth resist! refrain!
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain!"

In the first chapters Jim appears as the drunken and depraved pugilist, without God and without hope in the world. We next see him bowed to the earth, like a strong tree in a storm, under a sense of sin, and behold him pass from the agony of conviction into the fathomless joy of that peace with God which the Spirit brings. Thereafter from his own lips we learn at what he estimates himself in the sight of God—the least of all saints, and less than nothing. In the chapter preceding this we see him as the earnest servant and faithful messenger of Christ, beseeching his fellow-sinner, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.

The concluding chapter shall be devoted to an exhibition of ALL the peculiar qualities of his strong, simple nature, laid out for his Lord; especially his prowess—that prowess which, in the evil scenes and evil times of his worst days, made him the scourge and terror of the neighbourhood, a leading man in the "P. ring," and earned him the title of "The Crusher." A more suitable close to our narrative

could not be chosen, we think, than that of presenting all the peculiarities of his once fiendish nature under the control of the Spirit, and the direction of the providence of God, while imitating his Master, at the peril of his life, in seeking and saving one—all but lost. He gives the transaction a simpler title—he calls it "giving a neighbour a lift."

The village of Little K-, one dreary winter's day, was roused to holy indignation, and to exercise the deepest sympathy the human heart can yield, by the following occur-In a remote corner of the village there lived an rence. honest couple-old William Sewel and Mary his wife. They had two tall comely daughters, who lived at home, supported themselves, and increased the humble wages of their aged father, by what they earned as the village dressmakers. Early and late they plied their needle during the busy season, esteemed and admired by all, both passing rich in the possession of a reputation above suspicion. Old William was principally employed as a labourer on the roads of the district; he was famed all round for the simplicity of his character, the sobriety of his habits, his quiet life. and vast store of old-world stories. Mary his wife was equally respected by the matrons of the place as a dweller at home, an industrious, cleanly housewife, and a faithful mother, who had trained up her only two children to be a comfort to her declining years, and an honour to the village that gave them birth.

Some time before the day mentioned, there returned from India a British regiment, which was quartered for the winter in London. Its colours had floated in many a well-fought field, and its men, after a long absence, had returned home crowned with laurels bravely won, and on the breast of almost every man in it was hung the war-medal which, next

to his sovereign, his country, and his personal honour, the real soldier prizes. In this regiment there was a young corporal, a native of Little K--. He was laurelled and decorated more than many of his companions, for he excelled them all in courage, coolness, and daring. In one thing more he also excelled them-he was cruel, he was dissipated, and he was vicious in his tastes. He had a strong arm, an evil eye, and a bad heart. In an evil hour he obtained leave of absence for a week or two, and determined to spend them in his native village. Jane and Lizzy Sewel had been the companions of his childhood, and old William had dandled him on his knee. As was natural, therefore, much of his time was spent under the roof of old William and Mary. Unobserved by the family, there arose an intimacy between Lizzy and the corporal, which, but for the sleepless eve of a merciful God, and the strong arm of Jim, might have proved alike fatal to her reputation and her life; for in an unguarded moment over his cups the corporal allowed to escape from his lips words which betrayed in the martial friend of old William the destroyer of his daughter Lizzy. Thus warned, he forbade him his house, and prevented, as far as a parent can prevent, all intercourse between his daughter and the corporal. Of all who heard the story, Lizzy was the only one who refused her belief. obeyed her father, but still loved the corporal. of leave had closed on that dreary winter day, which stirred Little K- in every home within its borders. corporal, at an early hour, Lizzy Sewel had fled, unknown to all under her father's roof. The old man, in his big sorrow, sat by the fire side, his gray head resting on his hands on the table, amazed and in silence—a silence interrupted only now and then by that strong cry which alone can be uttered by the broken heart of a loving father. The

condition of the mother and Jane cannot be described. The morning and the greater part of the day had been spent in fruitless endeavours to trace the fugitives. At last the assistance and advice of good Mr. Power were called into Two business gentlemen, in the presence of Mr. Power, volunteered their services, and resolved on pursuit. In a happy moment it occurred to Mr. Power to mention the matter to Jim, who was accordingly asked to attend his master in the house. On appearing before him, and on being told the sad event, Jim's big heart was almost broken, for he knew and loved sincerely William and Mary Sewel and their daughters. He was next informed of the resolution of the two gentlemen present; he was asked to join and aid them in every way possible. After a moment's pause, he turned to Mr. Power, and said. "Sir, in every way I can, I shall help these gentlemen; but if you'll excuse me, sir, for saying it, I believe one can manage a business like this better than three, and of the three I believe I shall be the likeliest to succeed, because I know Lizzy; and, sir, although it's to my shame, I know the dens such blacklegs as the corporal generally crawl about better than either of these gentlemen. And as it's very certain, in doing a rough bit like this, sir, there'll be some rough work to do, I'm best able to do that, having had a longer apprenticeship than they have ever had. So, if you please, sir, I would like to be alone in the matter, and if these gentlemen please." After a little consultation, Jim's plan was considered the best, and he left Mr. Power's house to put it in execution.

An hour had scarcely passed away before Jim presented himself before his master, equipped for his journey. A smile of joy lit up the features of Mr. Power as he surveyed his gardener. There he stands, the pale lamplight falling on

his manly form. Never did Jim since his conversion reveal so much spirit, so much energy, so much of his former glee, as on this occasion; they who knew him before his change, and who saw him start on the present enterprise, were very much reminded of his manner on the eve of some of his fierce displays in the ring. In his bearing on the present occasion there was visible his former cool, collected manner, his wonted decisive do-or-die expression of lip, the old frenzy sparkled in his eye, and never was his courage more clearly expressed; yet over all there was a difference—a genial warmth, blended somehow with his coolness, a gentleness was apparent in his firmness, the chastened light of kindness somewhat softened the fire of his eye, and the desire for a quiet issue to his errand ever and anon welled up through his courage—a courage equal to any emergency. Looking at this gracious but powerful man, the writer seemed to see before him the statue of a huge athlete, over which grace had thrown the robe of her fine needlework, concealing, yet revealing to advantage all the parts of one of her noblest sons. His broad strong person was enveloped in a rough drab-coloured overcoat; around his waist was a leathern belt, at which dangled a dark lantern; his legs were protected against the snow by his garden-gaiters, well oiled, and his feet by his double-soled trenching boots. A walking-stick-or rather half cudgel, half staff, of sturdy oak—completed his equipment. After giving him some money, Mr. Power, in a simple earnest prayer, commended him to the care and grace of God, and Jim started.

Having visited the parents, and gathered all the facts of the departure they could supply, and having gleaned a few more from some of the neighbours, he was led to conclude they had started for London, across the Common lying about two miles to the north-east of Little K——. He

also had every reason to believe, from their having little money between them, they would have to perform most of the journey on foot, and, judging from the habits of the man, he was very likely to call at some of the public houses on the road. These simple materials, together with as accurate a description of their dress as he could ascertain, formed all that Jim, with the help of Divine Providence, could depend upon for guidance in his journey of mercy. The evening was clear and frosty, the sky was studded with stars, and a few inches of crisp snow covered the ground. About six o'clock he reached the Common. advancing he sat down on the stump of an old tree, and determined on the course he would pursue. And thus he reasoned, and thus he arranged. He resolved to take the main path across the Common, leading to the high road to London, call at the public house standing between the angle of the Common and the main road, hire a dog-cart with a lad to drive it, and keep the main road, calling at the principal public houses by the way, till he came to town; feeling convinced that, if they took this route and had to walk, he must not only get some information about them, but must overtake them before they reached the city. Having determined on his mode of procedure, trimmed his lamp, and implored the help of the all-seeing eye of God, he started on his journey. After an hour's walk he reached the high road, entered the tavern, hired the dog-cart, and while the horse was being harnessed he entered into conversation with the host and hostess, and told them the object of his journey. How was his anxious heart delighted on being informed that Lizzy and the corporal had been there that morning early, that they were going to London, and, as far as the host knew, they were to walk it; if so, they could not possibly reach town before twelve or one

in the morning. Thus informed, he sprang into the cart, and once more took the road.

High in spirits, strong in faith, and prepared for everything, he moved along. One thing alone tried him not a little, and that was the bad state of the roads, which very considerably impeded his progress; and the night was wearing away. This, added to the stopping at several public houses for information, where he received none, caused him much anxiety. In vain, for a considerable time, did he look and inquire for a smithy, where his horse might be "roughed." In this at last he was successful, and continued his journey at a rate more in keeping with his ardent feelings and holy mission. The clock had struck ten; at many a public house he had called, on many a traveller he had turned the blaze of his bull's-eye, but in vain; at the one he received no information, among the others recognised no known face. Lizzy and her Indian trooper, if on the road, must be far ahead. A full hour's ride lay between Jim and Praying as he went, he still persevered—faint, yet pursuing. On and on he rode, fevered from anxiety. He ceased conversing with his driver; he became absorbed (using his own words) "in working with his eye, handling his lamp, and rounding prayers in his Maker's ear, to whom the night is the same as the day."

Nearing the northern suburb of London now, he had almost sunk in despair, when he was suddenly roused by observing two figures—"weary figures"—before him, considerably ahead in the pale moonlight: a man and a woman—a tall woman. "Is it Lizzy and the soldier?" he asked himself, the blood in his heart almost standing still. "They are gone. The whip, the whip! give her the whip," shouted Jim to the frightened boy who was driving, who, on more occasions than the present, during the evening had

begun gravely to suspect that there was something wrong with his friend's head. In a moment they were on the spot where the two figures—"weary figures"—had vanished. On looking round him for a moment, Jim found himself opposite a large archway, leading to a yard paved with round, bullet-like stones, surrounded on all sides by tumbledown houses, wooden sheds, and stables, with as much order in their position as if they had been carried there by a storm of wind, or, as Jim expressed it, as "if they had been scattered about anyhow out of a giant's pepper-box." Every building was grim, black and smoky. There was only one tidy-like spot in it all, and that was in one of the corners-a public house, a night house, a house of call for carriers and market-gardeners. In former times, the days of its glory, it was the head-quarters of all the stage coaches leaving London for the north. On the night in question all was comparatively quiet; only here and there a carrier's waggon white with frost, or a vegetable cart on its way to Covent Garden, occupied the yard. After a moment's consideration Jim leapt from the cart, at the same time giving the boy strict orders not to leave the spot, and when he whistled immediately to drive into the yard. Coming to the window of the tavern he could hear the voices of the carriers and market men, as they sat before the fire in the He did not hear that of Lizzy or the soldier. Looking through the partially-opened door, he discovered the two figures—the "weary figures"—one of them was a tall woman, and that tall woman was Lizzy Sewel. Pausing for a moment, and debating with himself as to the next step, he there resolved to rescue her by gentle means; or if not, with his life he determined to rescue her.

When he entered, they were the only two before the bar. "Well, Lizzy," exclaimed Jim, "I did not think you and I were to meet in London."

Lizzy stared, Lizzy dropped the bread from her hand, and gasped out, "Jim! it is Jim!"

The soldier, all his cruelty, all his viciousness, and all his courage burning in his face, laid his hand on Jim's collar, and demanded who he was, what he was, and what he had to say to Lizzy Sewel. Jim quietly, but with tremendous vigour, made himself free from the grasp of the soldier, who in the same moment found himself with great violence thrown to the far end of the bar—this was Jim's reply. Jim turned to Lizzy, and in the most tender accents reminded her of home, of father and mother. Once more the soldier approached Jim, and with a little more respect said, with an oath, "Now, you country lout, take yourself off, or," with a terrible oath, "I'll take your life."

"I'll take myself off, sir, the moment Lizzy is ready to go; till then these walls will go sooner," replied Jim.

By this time the tap-room had emptied itself into the bar, and in deep astonishment all gazed at what was passing before them.

"Now then, Lizzy," said Jim, kindly but firmly, "make ready and go; finish your refreshment, for the road is long you know; and O, remember, the life of your old father and mother depends upon your coming with me." Lizzy burst into tears, and exclaimed, "I can't go home again, Jim; I must never, never enter that home again."

The soldier here struck Jim a violent blow in the face, and covered it with blood, at which Jim simply smiled, and, wiping the blood from his eyes, he coolly opened the door; then, seizing the soldier by the throat, he with all the strength of his powerful arms threw him out at the door on the stones of the court, where he fell and lay as if dead. While they were raising him Jim whistled, the boy drove into the yard, and by sheer force he lifted Lizzy, fainting

with fright, into the cart, and rested not till Lizzy Sewel was in her mother's arms. Now she is a happy wife, the mother of a large family, and never forgets to sing, with eyes full of tears, her deliverance from the "paw of the lion" by Jim. What name the Indian corporal gave to the deed we never heard; and among all the titles given to it by the friends of the family, the writer prefers, and will continue to prefer, Jim's own—"giving a neighbour a lift."

To the career of Billy Spang, who, in the capacity of an enterprising Australian farmer, is honoured as a shrewd man of business, but honoured most of all for his sterling piety, we shall be delighted to turn another day. Suffice it to say, that through the instrumentality of Jim, before he left England, Billy, at a prayer-meeting in that very room on whose doorstep Father Firm met him "a doing the grinder," found Jesus.

Jim still lives. Jim still plies for his fellow-sinners, the church of Christ, and a dying world, supplication and prayer, and continues unwearied in the work of the Lord, especially among working men, fallen women, and drunkards. And he earnestly, through the author, begs one favour of the reader, "that when he thinks of him he will ask God, on his behalf, that his feet be kept from falling, and his soul from death, till on the banks of Jordan his weary spirit shall undress, ford the stream hand in hand with Jesus, and be for ever lost in that light which is inaccessible and full of glory."

Dear reader, to this simple prayer you will not, you cannot refuse your—Amen.

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